



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Rain, sleet or snow

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PLUS LINDSEY DUNCAN: PINTER'S STAR 'THE STAINLESS STEEL QUEEN' in The Long Weekend

Hell hath no fury like the City star stripped of her £1m bonus

Michael Harrison

Nicola Horlick, the City high-flyer dubbed "Superwoman", yesterday embarked on an extraordinary campaign to clear her name of allegations of greed and disloyalty after dramatically quitting her £1m a year job with a top investment bank. Pursued by reporters and vowing "I will be heard", she confronted her bosses at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell in London before flying to Frankfurt, where she demanded a meeting with the parent bank's management committee.

Mrs Horlick, one of the City's most high-powered pension-fund managers and a mother of five, had flown over to Germany to plead her case after being suspended for allegedly trying to poach senior colleagues to join a rival bank in London. The row began on Tuesday with her suspension and escalated yesterday after she resigned to fight the "trumped-up" charges.

Mrs Horlick pledged to get re-instated and seek compensation of £1m. She has an legal action for unfair and wrongful dismissal. "I will be heard," she said yesterday. Armed with such resolution, a top-drawer lawyer and one of the financial world's most expensive spin doctors, she arrived at Deutsche Bank's headquarters yesterday afternoon.

Initially the bank said nobody would be available to see her. But it did grant her a two-hour meeting with a senior member of its legal department. Afterwards she said: "I feel I have had a fair hearing. We had a reasonable conversation. The (Deutsche Bank) lawyers will now examine the facts that are on the other side. I am happy with that and I am going home to see my children. With that she headed for the airport.

The affair comes after another scandal at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell over unauthorised trading by its former fund manager Peter Young which could cost £400m. Mr Young was dismissed and the Serious Fraud Office is investigating.

Mrs Horlick said in an interview yesterday that she was "the most vocal person in saying Peter Young was a wrong 'un' and for that reason she was seen by her bosses as 'confrontational'". But the bank yesterday insisted she was



Hectic schedule: Nicola Horlick in the City yesterday before flying to Frankfurt for a meeting with a senior legal executive at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell investment bank
Photograph: Michael Dalder/Reuters

suspended for breaches of contract. In a memo to staff at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, the firm's chief executive, Robert Smith, said she had been suspended for "soliciting senior colleagues to join a competitor".

Mrs Horlick believes the charge stems from being spotted lunching with a friend from a rival bank before Christmas. "There has been a very large misunderstanding. They... they decided to suspend me on the basis of hearsay," she said after arriving in Frankfurt.

Mrs Horlick's day had begun at 8am as she emerged from her home in Kensington, west London to be greeted by reporters. She accused the bank of "trumping up" charges and set off for the City to confront her bosses.

She swept into her old offices in Bishopsgate an hour and a half later, warned the security guard: "Don't you lay a finger on me" and proceeded to the third floor, to be greeted by her former fund management colleagues. Jaws dropped in astonishment. However, the man she had come to confront, Mr Smith, was not there. She was persuaded to leave the building by the head of personnel, Martyn Drain, but left defiantly, declaring: "Justice will be done, don't you worry. I was determined that I wasn't going to go to the trumped-up kangaroo court today..."

Next stop was the bank's head office in London in nearby Finsbury Circus to tackle the chief executive of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Michael Dobson.

Forewarned was forearmed. He, apparently, was not there and Mrs Horlick failed to get past the security guard, an old pro according to Ms Horlick. "Norman Marks, ex vice-squad," she explained to the journalistic entourage. From there it was on to the airport and a flight out to Frankfurt but not before Mrs Horlick fired off another salvo in the direction of her former employers. "I can't imagine how they could think I could be so disloyal. I came back a month early from maternity leave. Fortunately my secretary adores babies. I couldn't have shown more commitment. The stand I am taking now is nothing to do with pride. It is to do with what is right and wrong."

Further reports, page 22

£7m cost as war crimes case fails

86-year-old alleged Nazi war criminal not fit to face trial

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Britain's first war crimes prosecution collapsed yesterday after an Old Bailey jury decided that an 86-year-old man was incapable of standing trial for murder.

Szymon Serafinowicz had been committed for trial by a magistrate on three specimen counts of murdering Jews in 1941-2 during the systematic slaughter of the 3,000 Jewish inhabitants of the Mir district of Byelorussia, now Belarus, while it was under Nazi occupation. The cost to the taxpayer of bringing the case was £7m.

After a nine-day hearing, the seven-man, five-woman jury took two and half hours to decide that the frail and increasingly dishevelled Mr Serafinowicz was unfit to be tried, after hearing medical evidence that he was suffering from dementia, probably Alzheimer's disease, which meant he was incapable of instructing his lawyers, understanding the evidence or following the trial.

Sir Nicholas Lyell QC, the Attorney General, immediately entered a plea of *nolle prosequi*, which has the effect of permanently staying the proceedings. Nicholas Bowers, Mr Serafinowicz's solicitor, denied his client had faked his condition or that his appearance in court had been stage managed.

"My client is an elderly man whose health has deteriorated rapidly in recent years, during which he has suffered the death of his wife and then the incredible pressure of these proceedings."

"It would have been impossible and unrealistic for my client to endure the physical and mental strain of a lengthy and difficult trial."

Mr Serafinowicz's elder son, also called Szymon, said four years of investigation and prosecution had severely damaged his father's mental state.

A retired carpenter from Banstead, Surrey, Mr Serafinowicz, settled in Britain after the war with his Polish-born wife, Sir Derek Spencer QC, the Solicitor General, said he had volunteered for the local police force in Byelorussia after the German invasion of the USSR and was promoted by the Germans to district commander of the unit in Mir, where the Jews were forced into a ghetto. Mr Serafinowicz's counsel,

William Clegg QC, said he was only a police sergeant, and had saved people from the Nazis.

The prosecution was launched under the controversial 1991 War Crimes Act which allowed war crime charges to be brought for the first time in the UK.

The jury's decision will revive arguments raised in the passage of the War Crimes Bill through the House of Lords, that too many years have passed to make prosecutions involving the Second World War viable or fair.

About £5m has been spent on police investigations by Scotland Yard's War Crimes Unit. The Crown Prosecution Service has spent around £2m on initial investigations and on more detailed work for the Serafinowicz and other cases.

The CPS insisted yesterday that decisions on whether to bring five further potential prosecutions would be reached on their individual facts. Supporters of the legislation urged cases to be brought on their merits.

Lord Merlyn-Rees, a former Home Secretary and chairman of the all-party Parliamentary War Crimes Committee, said: "If there is evidence which will stand up in a court of law, then future prosecutions should take place, irrespective of what happened at the Old Bailey."

A Nazi killer? page 3

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J. D. Salinger publishes his first novel for 34 years

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

The scoop does not belong to Simon and Schuster, Random House or any other New York behemoth. Instead, for reasons as usual known only to himself, JD Salinger, that Howard Hughes of literary America, has chosen an obscure and tiny Virginia publishing house, Orchise Press, to issue his first book in 34 years. Or rather, re-issue. In truth *Hapworth 16, 1924* - only the fifth book to appear under the name of Jerome David Salinger - first appeared in the *New Yorker* magazine of 19

June 1965. It is a 20,000 word novella, the hyper-precocious ruminations of a boy aged seven in a letter to his family. Now its author has deemed it fit to appear as a book next month.

Inevitably, the obsession with privacy of this 78-year-old recluse, who lives in a remote village in New Hampshire, has bred its own mysteries. For instance, why Orchise Press? Its editor, Roger Lathbury, will not say, nor give any clue to the planned print run, or advance orders received. No review copies will be sent out, no photo of the writer will adorn its cover. Indeed, rumour has it

Salinger insisted his name should appear vertically, to diminish its impact.

That however is improbable. *The Catcher in the Rye*, the 1951 novel of teenage angst and sexuality in post-war America which gave him worldwide fame, still sells 400,000 copies a year. One devotee was Mark David Chapman, the murderer of John Lennon.

Hapworth 16, 1924, will be equally dissected. "The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Salinger cult," the critic Ron Rosenbaum called it in the *New York Observer*, in an essay on *The Catcher in the Rye* and the Chapman

case. "Somewhere buried in it might be the key to Salinger's mysterious silence ever since."

Since then only three further books have appeared, the last of them *Raise High the Roof Beams, Carpenters* in 1963. Salinger is still said to spend 15 hours a day at his typewriter, but the fruits of those labours are as impenetrable as everything else about him. Only in the mid-80s was he once smoked out of his lair, to block publication of a biography by Ian Hamilton which contained extracts from letters which the author argued were protected by copy-right.

QUICKLY

Brittan warning
Sir Leon Brittan, vice-president of the European Commission, gave the Tories a highly-charged warning to lay off Europe as an election issue. There were no vote in it. "For God's sake, lay off," he told the party. Page 2

Balloon let-down
Libya refused American millionaire Steve Fossett permission to fly his balloon over its land, forcing him to make a long detour in his attempt to fly around the world and almost certainly jeopardising any chance of success. Page 2



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Yesterday the United Kingdom arm of the company made clear its disapproval. Linda Huett, vice president of the UK firm, said: "Weight Watchers UK does not believe that children should ever be encouraged to diet."

A spokesman for the Duchess said her comments were taken out of context and reflected "normal" advice given by mothers to children about eating.

"So I began explaining a little of the Weight Watchers' regime. I said: 'OK,

ter which has been blown way out of proportion."

Ireland's first divorce since a 1995 referendum approved its introduction was granted by the High Court in Dublin even though legislation enacted then does not take effect until next month. In a private hearing the court ruled that the divorce law derived from the Constitution and not legislation. It heard the applicant, an unnamed man who is seriously ill, wanted to regularise his second relationship, and had made provision for his family. His wife did not want to be divorced but did not contest the application.

Junior Home Office Minister Tom Sackville said earlier in the Commons that it might be possible to prosecute the singer over the remarks because it was an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to incite another to take drugs. Mr Harvey has since apologised for his remarks.

The parents of haemophilic children who are demanding a purer and safer form of Factor VIII, received a setback to their campaign yesterday after a tribunal ruled that the blood product should be subject to VAT. Genetically-engineered recombinant Factor VIII is now the treatment of choice for haemophiliacs, but it is more expensive than the plasma-derived version, and the decision to impose VAT would further discourage health authorities from purchasing it. The Haemophilia Society said it would appeal direct to the Chancellor to overturn the decision. *Liz Hunt*

The terminally-ill mother of the 43 year-old German at the centre of a siege in the Irish Republic died soon after three bailiffs were shot trying to evict the pair from their remote cottage near Ballyconnell, Co Cavan. It emerged yesterday. The 44-hour siege ended yesterday morning when Gerrit Isenborges handed himself and the last of his six firearms over to gardai.

Lottery-funded arts projects are in danger of "grinding to a halt" because of lack of support from the business community. Many arts venues that have received lottery money also have to fund "partnership funding" from private sources. Lottery money is only allocated on the basis that a further sum is raised from the private sector. Research from the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts, shows that sponsorship suffered a startling drop from £13.9m in 1994-95 to £3.3m last year despite the need for extra funds. *David Lister*

That decision and Sir Leon's attack will be most unwelcome to British ministers who are currently showing acute sensitivity to European issues – to the point of making heavy threats

He also said it was a "complete error" to think that talk of renegotiation of the Maastricht treaty strengthened the British hand: "Those who think that our partners would be so terrified of this prospect that they will lie down in a supine fashion because the taboo of renegotiation has been lifted are living in Cloud-cuckoo-land."

Take-off: Steve Fossett leaving St Louis on Monday Photograph: Reuters

Charles Arthur

Mr Fossett's is the third attempt in a fortnight to be first to circle the world by balloon. The first, by a team including Richard Branson, failed just 19 hours after taking off in Morocco. The sec-

His attempt is a distinctly low-profile one compared to those of the previous two failures: he is flying alone, rather than in a team, and his balloon is smaller and flying at lower heights.

There have also been claims that other Euro-sceptics have been under pres-

Other Euro-sceptics denied last night that they had been put under pressure. Sir George Gardiner, who voted against the Government on the Maastricht Bill, said he had not been approached.

But the commission has also decided that its officials, such as Geoffrey Martin, head of the European Commission office in London, should be allowed to give interviews during the election campaign – to correct false impressions left by any of the contestants.

Charles Arthur

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Judith Judd

Local authorities may be given new powers to take back financial control of under-performing schools, Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education said yesterday. Her speech to the Society of Education Officers' conference in Harrogate comes as the

Labour accused the Government of stealing its clothes, saying Mrs Shephard had been forced to respond to its party broadcast this week, which included failing schools. Before Christmas, Labour said, she attacked Calderdale local authority for not

acting over Ridings School, where discipline collapsed. Now she appeared to be conceding that councils needed new powers to deal with failing schools.

Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) go into Calderdale on Monday. At present councils can take over the running of a school's budget only if it seriously mis-

manages its affairs. Around 90 per cent of funding is delegated by councils to schools. Mrs Shephard told education officers she is considering given authorities power to take over budgets of schools where standards are low.

such serious weaknesses they would have difficulty improving. About 2 per cent of schools have been pronounced a failure by inspectors; a further 8 per cent have serious weaknesses.

In a white paper in June, the Government proposed local authorities should have power formally to warn schools with

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news



Red star: Chris Evans at Riverside studios in London yesterday to prepare for TFI Friday, the programme at the centre of his Radio One dispute Photograph: Tom Pilon



The BBC's advertisement in Piccadilly Circus yesterday for a successor to Evans



Photographs: John Voos

Please release me, says Evans as BBC row goes up in lights

The BBC decided to be as full frontally aggressive as their errant broadcaster Chris Evans yesterday when the corporation set a new precedent by advertising for a replacement for Evans on a neon sign in Piccadilly Circus.

A management meeting at Radio One yesterday, attended by the station's controller Matthew Bannister, decided to take the initiative and £2,000 was paid for the prime site.

The sign flashed the words: "Wanted. Radio One breakfast DJ. Must work five days a week. Ginger hair an advantage. Apply 97.99 FM Radio One."

A Radio One spokeswoman denied last night that the joke sign was a waste of licence-payers' money, saying that the corporation had managed to secure a particularly advantageous rate.

Evans gave in his notice on Thursday after being refused permission to reduce his working week to four days and take Fridays off. The ginger-haired presenter also hosts the Channel 4 programme TFI Friday on Friday evenings.

Yesterday Evans returned to the offensive on his Radio One breakfast show. He admitted the dispute had left him feeling sad but he refused to withdraw his resignation, even though fellow DJ Simon Mayo urged him to stay on.

He told listeners: "I'm a little forlorn," during the 9am handover to Mayo. But

Troubled DJ goes on the offensive on breakfast show after resignation

his admission came after he provocatively chose to play songs including "Please Release Me. Let Me Go" and another which featured the lyrics: "Give me something before I splutter out".

In a bizarre handover, Mayo told him: "Change your mind." Evans said: "What do you mean?" - to which Mayo replied: "Change your mind." Evans then said: "I can't because I can't have Fridays off."

Mayo told him: "Well convert to Islam. Friday is a holy day. You can convert to Islam and say 'Look, it's a religious point, now you have to give me Fridays off'. Why don't you do Sundays to Thursdays?"

Evans replied: "No, it's still six days a week."

Then Mayo said: "I've just remembered - Matthew said don't talk about it on the handover."

Evans had also used his programme to appeal for another job. This appeared to have paid dividends as later in the day the commercial station Talk Radio revealed that it was going to offer Evans £1m to work for them.

A spokesman said: "A request has been sent to his agent and we hope ne-

gotiations are going to start soon. Everything is negotiable. Chris would find the perfect format with us. He is a brilliant talker and would be great for the station."

BBC executives will now have to consider whether it is worth keeping Evans on until the end of his contract on 27 March with the risk that he will use his remaining shows to make comments about the corporation.

The station's spokeswoman said last night: "We're not unhappy about what he said on his breakfast show. Chris is a spontaneous broadcaster but we will look at each incident individually and if we feel there is one we need to talk to him about then we will do so."

Evans, who earns more than £7,000 a day for his outspoken brand of broadcasting, told listeners: "In the middle of last summer I asked for Fridays off because we have got to do the TV show."

"... I went to them last summer because I didn't know if the TV show was going to be a success or not."

"Getting up to do the show is not a big deal, I'm not saying it's hard work, but what I wanted to do was have a nice

day on Friday, do my TV show and get into work at 11 o'clock full of energy for 6.15, work till about 8 and that's it."

"So I said 'Please can I have Fridays off, let someone else do the show'. In America it is common practice for a DJ to do Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. That's all I wanted."

"In November I went back and asked for the same deal. I said: 'Come on it's not working out, it's too long a week and I don't have to do it. Please', I said."

"They said we'll give you more weeks off next year. OK, so I now got 12 weeks off."

Evans then explained why he went back again to ask for Fridays off.

He said: "This Christmas I've had a great time. We did one TV show without having to get up at 5am each morning. I asked again and the answer is still no."

"I love to work on the radio, I absolutely adore it. It's my favourite thing in the whole world, although I admit we get paid an absolute fortune."

"We wanted to be here from Monday to Thursday but apparently that's not good enough. That's the whole thing, that's absolutely true. We are being forced out, that's it. 'If somebody else wants to offer us a job Monday to Thursday we'd love to do it.'"

Leading article, page 19

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Jonathan King calls for boycott of Brit awards

David Lister
Arts News Editor

A boycott of the premier rock music awards, the Brits, has been called by one of the leading music celebrities, Jonathan King, who is also a former producer and presenter of the awards ceremony.

Mr King claims last week's nominations show the big multinational record labels have elbowed out artists on smaller independent labels.

In a round robin to key figures in the music industry he urges them: "Spoil your ballot papers. Tear them up. As an industry we should not only be fair, but be seen to be fair."

Last week saw Brit nominations for stars including the Spice Girls and Oasis. The awards ceremony takes place next month.

In his memo Mr King says other highly successful names are not on the list because they do not have contracts with the big record companies. "For example, a star like Peter Andre is not nominated as best male despite two number one hits... Why not? Because Mushroom [his independent record label] is not a major of course."

He added: "Any shrewd observer can spot the glaring omissions. If any missing names just happen to be on smaller, indie labels, the implication is

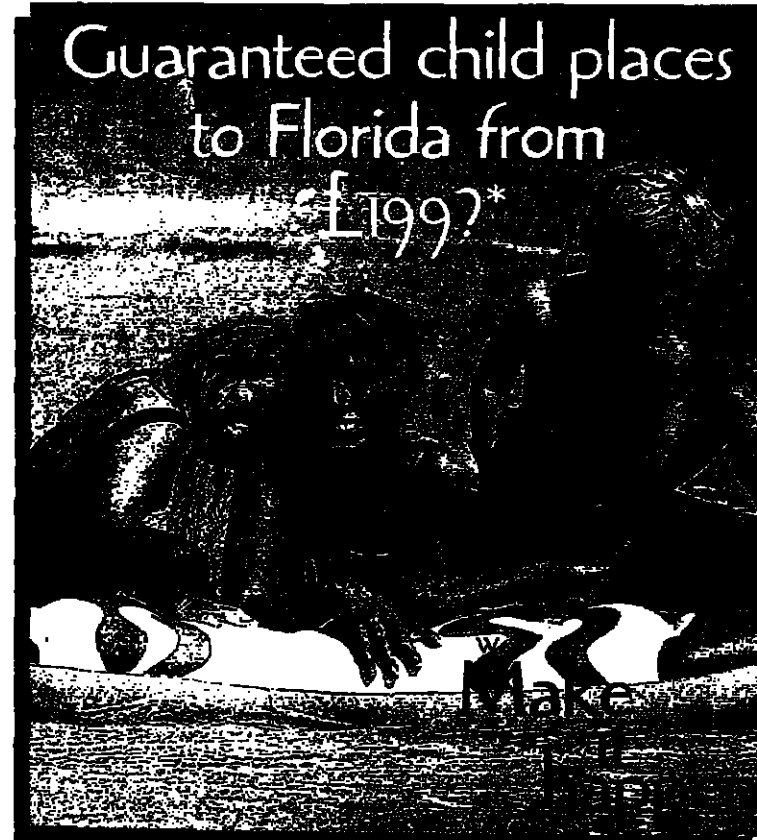
that the big boys have fixed it yet again."

Mr King's company used to produce the Brit awards ceremony until four years ago, but he said yesterday: "We resigned as producers because we felt it was impossible for our fair, objective attitude towards the event to continue."

The Brits are organised by the British Phonographic Association (BPA). Lisa Anderson of the BPA is the executive producer of the award. She said yesterday: "We changed the voting system because it seemed to me that it did some years ago look like a bit of a carve up."

"Now the record companies only get a quarter of the votes."

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Goldsmith v Heath in battle of the old devils



Sir James Goldsmith: New newspaper accuses Sir Edward Heath over EU

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

A political battle of titanic proportions broke out yesterday as the billionaire financier Sir James Goldsmith squared up to Sir Edward Heath over Europe.

The former Prime Minister and the business mogul, who have more than 80 years' involvement in politics between them, accused each other of lying about what Sir Edward did or did not know in 1960 about the future of the community.

Neither, however, seemed likely to press their allegations in a court of law. "I'm not likely to take legal action against a multi-billionaire who is trying to buy the country's vote with £20m," Sir Edward said of his former Conservative Party colleague.

The row started when Sir James launched *News*, his Referendum Party's new national newspaper, with a story about how the Heath government had "lied through their teeth" to the British public on the consequences of joining the Common Market. A letter sent to Sir Edward in 1960 by the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmer, talked of "serious surrenders of sovereignty" and added that his objections "ought to be brought out into the open", according to the paper.

But, it added, Sir Edward told the voters that "there is no question of any ero-

sion of essential national sovereignty".

Sir Edward was having none of it. He had been taken out of context, he complained, and Sir James was "cheating".

When he had said there would be no erosion of national sovereignty, he had added: "What is proposed is a sharing and an enlarging of individual national sovereignties in the general interest," he said.

A copy of the letter revealed that that, too, had been selectively quoted. While it did mention sovereignty and said that there would be objections on those grounds to joining the Common Market, it added a rider which was not mentioned by Sir James' newspaper.

Although such considerations should be given due weight because of their political implications, "I do not for one moment wish to convey the impression that they must necessarily tip the scale," he said.

Sir James was merely seeking publicity. Sir Edward suggested, and a high-profile libel case would simply create it. But although he brushed aside suggestions that he might go to court, he said he would continue to make his position clear. He said that what the EC nations were doing was not surrendering sovereignty, but pooling it. Britain had gained influence over other countries as well as winning trade as a result, he argued.



Sir Edward Heath: Unlikely to take legal action against 'multi-billionaire'

Gallup discovers new way of making a point

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Gallup's switch to random telephone interviewing in its opinion poll yesterday means all the polling companies have now changed their methods since their failure to gauge voters' intentions at the last election.

The main pollsters are now divided between new-style random polls and adjusted, old-style polls. However, the results are very similar. Gallup's 18-point lead for Labour means that all reputable companies now put Labour between 18 and 21 percentage points ahead.

Gallup was the last to change, and its findings increasingly stood out like a sore thumb: last month it put the Labour Party 37 points ahead.

Gallup was the first company to carry out opinion polls in Britain, just before the war, and it made its name heralding Winston Churchill's "unthinkable" defeat in 1945.

Until late last year it looked as if Gallup would do this year's election much as everyone did 1992, while the other companies would all try new methods.

But the weight of evidence against the way it was done last time was overwhelming and Gallup's nerve finally cracked.

On election day, 9 April 1992, the main pollsters all put the parties almost neck and neck. Labour was an average 0.8 points ahead. Only Gallup put the Conservatives ahead and only by half a percentage point. In the actual vote the Tories won by 7.6 points.

This time there will be two types of poll. NOP and MORI are quota polls while ICM—and now Gallup—are random. Quota polls use the old method of interviewing people in the street or at home. Interviewers have to fill quotas according to sex, age and class. Since the last election the quotas have been changed, as it turned out they were too working-class.

Random polls are new in this country and are carried out over the telephone, using computers to dial numbers at random. They are, in theory, a better way of getting a representative sample. The problem is with people who don't have phones or who don't like taking part in telephone surveys.

The companies also have different ways of accounting for the "shy Tories" factor. It is accepted that Tories are less likely to take part in opinion polls and less likely to declare how they intend to vote. ICM, which works for Tory Central Office and the *Guardian*, makes the most drastic adjustment for this, which until now produced the lowest Labour leads.

But the adjustments all seem to produce roughly the same outcome: the most recent polls from each of the four main companies were within a few percentage points of each other. It looks as though they will all be right or wrong together—again.

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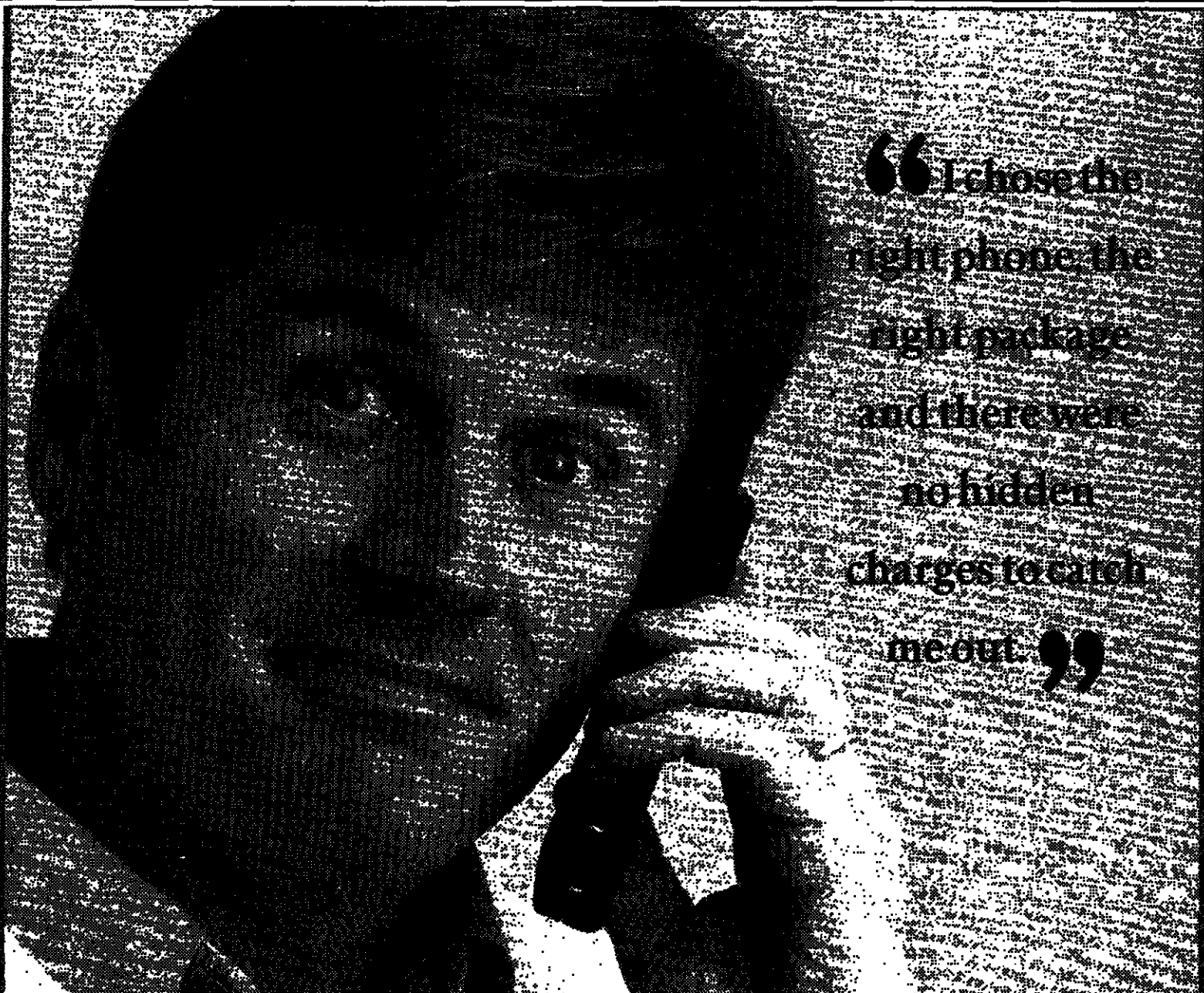
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news

Can this woman win the election for Labour?

Marianne Macdonald
Media Correspondent

Labour's secret weapon, the actress Penny Buntin, was "reeling" from the spotlight which turned on her yesterday after starring in an election broadcast aimed at middle-aged women.

She plays the character of Helen, a harassed mother trying to cope with poor schools, NHS waiting lists and rising crime and increasingly fed up with the policies of the Tories.

She tells her complacent husband Paul, who is reading a *Daily Mail*-style newspaper with the headline 'Major: I Want Five More Years'. "They don't de-

serve five more weeks, those people." Later, as she blows out a candle at a children's party, she fervently wishes that John Major will lose the election.

"Next time the Tories would stop at nothing. Enough is enough," says a voiceover.

Buntin, 36, is now tipped to be the star of election year in

the wake of the celebrity attained by Scott Woods, the left-wing actor whose eyes were superimposed on Tony Blair last year for the Tory "Devil eyes" advertisement. She also follows in the footsteps of the family who became embroiled in the "War of Jennifer's Ear" after their daughter's 11-month

wait for an ear operation was featured in a Labour Party broadcast in 1992. The six-year-old girl's parents later turned out to have differing political views and subsequently split up.

Despite such controversies Labour apparently took few precautions over the actress's political bias, but have struck

luckily in their choice of a firm Labour voter for the party's own version of the "Oxo mum".

"They don't ask if you are a Labour voter when you audition for party political broadcasts," Buntin revealed yesterday.

"But they do ask if you have been a paid-up member of a political party, which I wasn't."

The actress who played Dr Jessica Hardman in *Medics* and stars in the BBC2 comedy *Grown Ups* as Mel, a disillusioned social worker, said she had once voted Tory because she didn't know any better.

"I was 18 and I was confronted with the slip and Margaret Thatcher's name was on this piece of paper and I thought, 'Let's have a woman prime minister. I was very naive. I found myself with the vote and I didn't know a damn thing about the political parties. They should teach political education in school.'"

The public-school educated actress, who lives in south-west London, was brought up in Cambridge and read English at Oxford. She is single and shares

many of Labour's concerns. "One listens to the radio and gets terrified, hearing about the terrible divide between schools and the people who can afford to give their children a good education and the people who can't," she said.

"I can't talk about politics but I do have a visceral belief in the Labour Party from a humanitarian standpoint. They are more for an equal world than anyone else, and more concerned about the elderly."

She added that she found the situation with the health service "just so depressing". "I can't help having a sneaking feeling the Tories do want to dismantle it. The divide between the haves and have-nots is getting bigger and bigger."



Lighting the way: Penny Buntin, star of Labour's new broadcast - 'I do believe in them. They are more for an equal world than anyone else'

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

index

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Exhibition crisis: Consensus reached over Greenwich showcase, but investors fear a Labour government could still scrap project

Deal secures Millennium show's future

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

The future of the Millennium Exhibition at Greenwich looked almost assured last night as negotiations over an agreed statement from the Government and Opposition reached a successful conclusion.

However the agreement still has another hurdle to cross because the Millennium Commission, which is funding the £580m exhibition, is worried that Labour could still pull the plug on it, if elected.

Sources on both sides of the table said that an agreement which would allow building work to commence and which would also ensure that Labour could review progress if elected was likely to be presented to Parliament early next week.

The intervention of the Labour leader, Tony Blair, into the negotiations proved crucial as he was determined to ensure that Labour was not blamed for the collapse of the exhibition. While the Labour spokesman for national heritage, Jack Cunningham, had wavered because of opposition from many northern Labour MPs, Mr Blair wanted to guarantee the exhibition's future and had a number of telephone conversations with the deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine, following their meeting on Thursday.

However, moves towards a consensus were not helped when Mr Major launched an attack on Labour's attitude to the Millennium Exhibition on BBC local radio: "The Labour party have had their representative on the discussions and debate over this project from the outset. They can't claim not to have known what the situation was. It's very surprising at the last moment that they have failed to understand what is going on and created this difficulty."

However, Michael Heseltine, who is desperate to see the project brought to fruition was in a more ebullient mood, refusing to be drawn into criticism of Labour. He said on Radio 4's *World at One*: "I'm not prepared to get into any sort of public controversy over this matter at a time when we are negotiating."

He dismissed as inconceivable the idea that it would end up with a Labour government scrapping the project, leaving the companies which had invested in the project with the bill, and said he did not feel uncomfortable about how Labour had ended up with such a prominent role in the exhibition's future. Labour had insisted on three points: a limit to the overall budget; a limit to the contingencies; and the right to review the scheme once in government.

Millennium Central, the exhibition organisers, said that it was essential for a quick conclusion to the negotiations in order to place orders for steel and to sign the £20m contract for the transfer of the land from British Gas to English Partnerships, a government quango.

Millennium Fund, page 21



Clean break: A worker on the Millennium site masked against the threat of chemicals being cleaned from the area

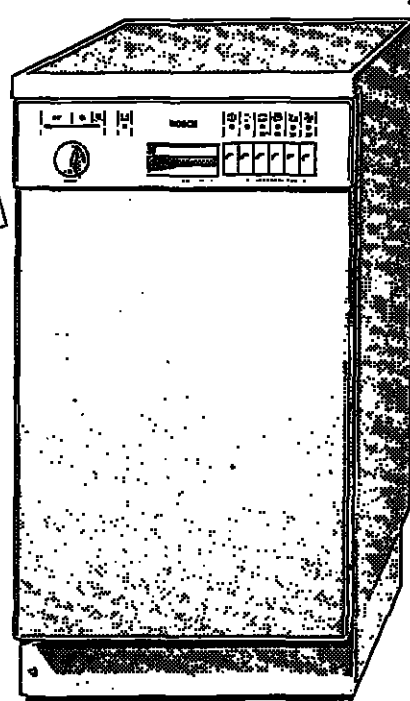
Photograph: Brian Harris

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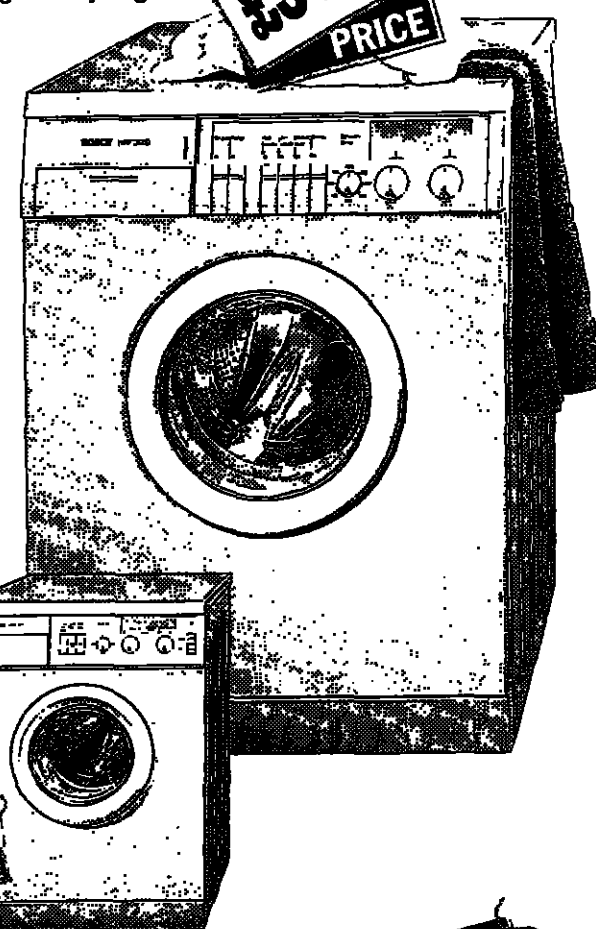
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Great celebration or waste of cash?

Ian Dowell, Editor, Birmingham Evening Mail:
We knew the bid from the Greenwich project was flawed: the Jubilee tube line had to be completed in time, contaminated land had to be cleared and there was no easy access to the site. In Birmingham, the funding was already in place and we have the facilities here already. The decision to give the award to Greenwich has left a very bad taste that may well cost the Government the General Election.

Erik Milne, manager, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Laverne:
I just haven't been following the story at all, probably because I'm north of the border it's just geographically far too remote. Perhaps if they spread the millennium projects around the country a bit more then maybe I would pay more attention, but I'm not in favour of a big central exhibition.

Alan Coren, broadcaster:
I believe the millennium should be as tacky as possible. I very much want to have the Ferris wheel, just so people at the top will be able to see the state of London. I want a huge dome in Greenwich because it will be awful and ghastly. However the idea that this Government is going to be brought down by failing to say how it will fund the millennium is ridiculous.

Victor Rose, Landlord, Miners Arms Pub in Bristol:
I think that the dome they're going to put up is a waste of money. I think they should put the money towards different ways of celebrating the millennium, and perhaps invest in something smaller instead. I don't know how politically damaging this will be for the Government.

Compiled by Sam Coates

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25 years on, ghosts return to challenge the official truths about Bloody Sunday

Call for fresh inquiry into slaughter on the streets of Londonderry



DAVID McKITTERICK

Relatives of 13 unarmed civilians shot dead by troops on "Bloody Sunday" have called for a new inquiry after fresh evidence emerged suggesting that soldiers opened fire from Londonderry city walls, high above the scene.

It had always been claimed the dead were hit by fire from ground level when paratroopers opened up on an anti-internment civil rights march in the city 25 years ago.

Now it appears that soldiers on duty on the walls overlooking the Bogside said they fired as well.

They claim they were fired on, and a local radio ham has produced a recording of Army transmissions, while a Londonderry doctor who attended some of the post-mortem examinations says three of the victims were killed by bullets which appeared to have been fired downwards at a 45-degree angle. Dr Raymond Maclean who was on the march was never called to give evidence at a public tribunal.

A new book also casts doubt on the independence of the official inquiry into the killings on 30 January 1972, which far from fading into the realms of history continue to have a huge significance for republicans.

The question of how the authorities handle killings by members of the security forces, in this and many other cases, remains a live issue and is seen as one of the most controversial in the field of justice.

Only this week there were criticisms of allegedly preferential treatment of a soldier, Lee Clegg of the Parachute Regiment, whose murder conviction was, unusually, referred back to the courts for review.



Day of shame: The Bishop of Derry, Dr Edward Daly, negotiating a way past soldiers as friends and relatives help to carry away one of the victims of the shootings on 30 January, 1972. Photograph: Pacemaker

ment of a soldier, Lee Clegg of the Parachute Regiment, whose murder conviction was, unusually, referred back to the courts for review.

The Bloody Sunday killings were formally investigated by the then Lord Chief Justice, the late Lord Widgery.

His finding that the firing of some paratroopers had "bordered on the reckless" brought a deluge of criticism and allegations that it was a "whitewash" rather than an honest attempt to find out how 14 people came to be shot dead by British soldiers.

The Government originally claimed that all or most of the accused were gunmen or nail-bombers. But Lord Widgery recorded that no one except soldiers gave him evidence of seeing firearms or bombs.

He concluded, however, that while none of the deceased was proved to have a gun or bomb when shot, there was a strong suspicion that some had earlier fired guns or handled bombs.

A new book, *Eyewitness Bloody Sunday* by Don Mullan, cites an official Home Office document, newly released by the Public Record Office, which lends support to the contention that Lord Widgery approached his findings with a view of blackening the dead and defending the soldiers' actions.

The book also says that three of the dead were shot from the city walls - Michael McDaid, aged 20, John Young, 17, and William Nash, 19.

The document records a meeting between Lord Widgery and a Home Office representative - presumably a minister or senior official - as the Lord Chief Justice was finalising his report. A hand-written note on the document records: "LCJ will pile up the case against the deceased... but will conclude that he cannot find with certainty that any one of 13 was a

gunman." (One of the 14 died later from his wounds).

The rest of the memorandum shows that the smallest details were together examined by Lord Widgery and the Government.

For example, the Home Office recorded its opinions about the performance of army officers - "Brigadier MacLennan loyally covered up for his subordinates, but Colonel Wilford's activities surely need some explaining."

The former Catholic Bishop of Derry, Dr Edward Daly, said of the Widgery report: "I was aghast by it, by the fact that the British Lord Chief Justice would not acknowledge the innocence of the victims and made a rather feeble attempt at exonerating those who actually pulled the trigger."

"But even though Widgery did engage in a whitewash, the evidence of the Paras was taken apart by our lawyers, and I think it was shown up as the fabrication that it was."

Tony Doherty, whose father was one of the dead, said: "It is clear that the Widgery team was stacked in favour of the Army's version."

"There was a spoken or unspoken conspiracy hatched in the upper echelons between Whitehall mandarins and the Widgery tribunal."

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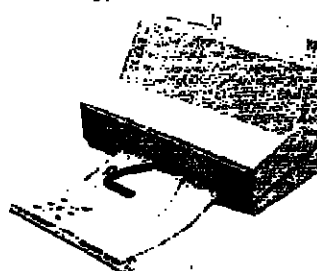
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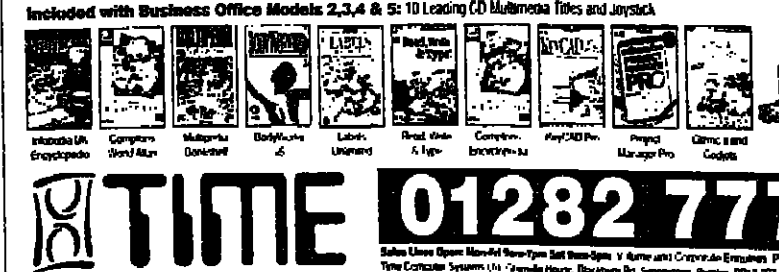
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way one of the victims
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Photograph: Pacemaker

un." (One of the 14 died later
his wounds).
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Patrick's broken spirit by our
eyes, and it was shown up
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Lord Widgery said we rather was
in the evidence. It is clear that
Widgery's report was stacked in
favor of the British version.

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news

Ban on feeding the pigeons puts tourists in a flap

David Garfinkel

Trafalgar Square was reminiscent of a scene from Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* yesterday, as hundreds of speckled pigeons gathered to protest against an attempt by Westminster City Council to have them removed.

Councillors are to ask the Department of National Heritage to withdraw the official food-vendor's licence, in a bid to reduce the size of the flock.

For Bernard Rayner, who owns the business, and plans to fight the move, that could mean Lord Nelson will lose some very dear friends. "I have been working here all my life. My family has been running this stand since 1952, and now they are trying to destroy my livelihood," he said. "Everyone loves the birds, especially the kids."

People of all nationalities flock to the square marvel at and feed the feathered gathering, and for many tourists it is as much an attraction as Buckingham Palace and Madame Tussauds.

US visitors David and Carol Whisman said that when they thought of England, they remembered Mary Poppins feeding the pigeons. "It is like an event in itself coming here, and it would be very disappointing if they got rid of all the birds," said Mr Whisman, 38. "There is only one place you can really come to feed them - and that's here."

But entertainment value is not the only thing the pigeons bring to the area. Every year, over a ton of droppings have to be removed from Nelson's Column alone, and according to the council, it damages surrounding buildings.

A spokeswoman for the Department of National Heritage said there would be no immediate action as Mr Bernard still had two years left on his licence.

"We will consider what the council have to say. But Trafalgar Square is a recognised landmark and pigeons are part of the attraction," she said.

The pigeons, however, who declined to comment, seemed unruffled by all the fuss.



Animal attraction: The pigeons of Trafalgar Square are a firm favourite with visitors to London

Photograph: Brian Harris

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Trees will be used to fire power station

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

The construction of Britain's first wood burning power station will start this summer, after the project won planning permission this week.

The eight megawatt power station at Eggborough, North Yorkshire, will generate enough power for 18,000 homes. The £20m scheme will be fuelled partly from commercial forests in the region, using the small branches and trunks produced when young woodlands are thinned out.

Eventually the bulk of its fuel wood will come from fast growing willow tree plantations grown on nearby farmland. To date 34 hectares have been planted, and a further 125 will be planted this spring. The willows will be fertilised with the sludge from sewage works, and wood ash.

Government scientists have calculated that if a quarter of Britain's total area of farmland was given over to such "energy" woodlands this would provide sufficient fuel to continuously generate nearly two-thirds of current electricity demand.

It is regarded as an environment-friendly form of electricity generation because unlike coal, oil and gas burning power stations, those burning wood do not increase the amount of global-warming carbon dioxide gas in the atmosphere.

Like fossil fuels, burning wood does give off carbon dioxide. But an equal quantity of the

gas is absorbed by the growing trees which provide fresh wood for the power station.

The willow shoots will be harvested by cutting them off at ground level. They quickly grow new shoots which reach a height of three metres or more before the cutting machine comes round again, three years later.

The harvested shoots will be cut into chips and then "cooked" in the power station at a temperature of 800°C with a limited supply of oxygen. This "gasification" process gives off large amounts of heat, and hydrogen, methane, carbon monoxide and dioxide gases.

The mixture of gases is cleaned by chemical scrubbers and filters then used as fuel for a gas turbine engine which powers an electricity generator.

The hot exhaust gases from the turbine then flow through a boiler, which raises steam for another turbine-generator. When the exhaust gases finally emerge they are still hot enough for one more task - drying the incoming wood chips.

Gasifying the wood reduces air pollution and allows much more of the chemical energy to be converted into electricity.

Three separate projects for wood burning power stations have been approved under a government scheme which boosts electricity generated from renewable energy sources. Eggborough, backed by an international consortium led by a subsidiary of Yorkshire Water, is the most advanced.

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Palestinians await fruits of Hebron deal

Euphoria among the Palestinians in the Old City of Hebron at the withdrawal of Israeli troops from 80 per cent of their city did not last long. At dawn the Palestinian flag was raised over the old Israeli military headquarters, but within hours a scuffle between an Israeli settler and a Palestinian led the Israeli army to declare a curfew in the fifth of Hebron it still controls.

A patrol of paramilitary border police marched down the main road shouting at Palestinians to get back into their houses. A banana seller was too slow and a soldier kicked over his scales. "Things will go badly with us," said Jamal Maraga, selling embroidered dresses from his shop in the kasbah. "People here are frightened."

It was all in sharp contrast to the self-congratulatory tone among Israeli, Palestinian and American officials who had agreed the Hebron protocol last Wednesday. In Tel Aviv Martyn Indyk, the American ambassador, was confidently telling Israeli journalists that "we are now taking the first step towards the building of trust. Concerning Hebron the agreement is just and balanced. It gives Jews security and allows Arabs to return to normal life".

The day had begun with a young Palestinian shining up the antenna on top of the Israeli military headquarters from which Israel had ruled Hebron since 1967. Thousands of Palestinians who had gathered to watch the transfer of power had gone home. Only about 100 remained at 6am to watch Lt Col Gadi, the commander of the Israeli brigade in Hebron, hand over to a Palestinian officer.

Unlike the Israeli withdrawal from Nablus in 1995 there was no burning of Israeli flags. Within hours 400 Palestinian police were deploying, emphasising their presence by vigorously directing the sparse traffic. More effectively some 1,000 members of the Preventive Security Service, the largest of the nine Palestinian intelligence services, led by Jibril Rajoub, were to be seen in every street. Entering the Israeli headquar-

Normality is still some way off for Arabs under Israeli control, reports Patrick Cockburn

ters, Mr Rajoub, a former prisoner, said: "I was detained here five times. This is the first time I enter as a free man."

The arrival of Palestinian security men is considered a mixed blessing. As Palestinians streamed through Mamluk gateway into the al-Ibrahimi mosque a sermon was being broadcast saying: "We don't want the Palestinian Authority to use arbitrary measures like the Israelis did." In his office Rafiq al-Natshe, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said: "We are very worried by any monopoly of power by the intelligence services."

Mr Natshe's main complaint was not about the protocol on Hebron, but the agreement to partition the city reached in 1995. "It was a big mistake by our leaders," he said. Himself a member of Fatah and former PLO ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mr Natshe added that when the Palestinian Council met to discuss the latest accord on Hebron "there were only a few copies of the agreement available - and none were in Arabic". He thought the new Palestinian police would be acceptable in Hebron "but if the settlers kill some Palestinians then the people will expect the police to support them".

By yesterday morning friction was already building up. Noam Arnon, leader of the 400 settlers, was standing on the edge of the road, saying the Hebron accord marked "the surrender of the free world to terrorism. The Oslo process brings blood. To sign an agreement with the PLO is like signing with Saddam Hussein. It is a cruel regime."

For the 20,000 Palestinians in Hebron still under Israeli control the gains of the settlers may be more evident than their losses. When a scuffle started police and soldiers pushed for-

ward into the vegetable market. The crowd of onlookers hurled fruit and vegetables. The army then announced a curfew.

The settlers also seemed anxious to provoke an incident. Shani Horovitz, 37, a settler activist from Brooklyn, stopped her car and said Palestinians had threatened her. She shouted: "I want my army to protect me." She then stood in the road blocking vehicles while soldiers tried to persuade her to move. Around her the border police enforced the curfew against Palestinians but not against the settlers. In the city centre, empty apart from army patrols, there was little sign of Mr Indyk's promised return to normal life for the Palestinians.



Confrontation: A Palestinian gesturing with his prayer beads during an argument with an Israeli soldier in Hebron yesterday Photograph: Reuters

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Tom apart: A rabbi in Hebron helping a Jewish settler mend his clothes in mourning at the loss of the city Photograph: Reuters

A new Berlin on the West Bank

Patrick Cockburn

In future Hebron will be divided as Beirut and Berlin were in the past.

The 100,000 Palestinians on the western side of the city, called H1, come under the control of the Palestinian Authority. The eastern fifth of Hebron, where some 50 Jewish families live along with 20,000 Palestinians, remains under Israeli control and will be known as H2.

In theory, civilians will be able to pass between the two sides of the city but already yesterday there were long queues of Palestinian cars trying to get to the al-Ibrahimi mosque, which remains under Israeli control. There will be 400 armed Palestinian police.

The high ground overlooking Jewish houses will be demilitarised and patrolled by joint patrols only.

The agreement, which effectively partitions Hebron, was signed by Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, with the Labour government in 1995. The protocol signed last week makes surprisingly few changes. Buffer zones will be established

between the two sides. Much negotiating time was spent on the future of Shuhada street, the main road, which has been closed to Palestinians since 1994, when Baruch Goldstein massacred 29 Palestinian worshippers in the Ibrahimi mosque. This is to be rebuilt and redesigned by the US to minimise friction between Israeli settlers and Palestinians.

USAID even promises to plant flowers and small shrubs. The road will be reopened in four months.

Security of settlers is provided for in great detail. Palestinian police will only carry short-range sub-machine-guns. No high buildings can be built next to Jewish enclaves. In the Palestinian area the Imara, or security headquarters, has already been turned over to Palestinian security. Shops in the vegetable market - but not stalls - will be reopened.

But, given the proximity between settlers and Palestinians, an essential element of security for the Jews will be the co-operation of the 1,000 Palestinian plainclothes security personnel in Hebron.



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Self-respecting Serbs learn to laugh again

Steve Crawshaw
Belgrade

The Sava Centre in Belgrade is not, it must be said, an inspiring building. The 1970s conference-concert hall stands in a wasteland in the high-rise district of Novi Beograd. With its glassed-over entrance hall, it looks like a giant conservatory crossed with a hospital block.

Not, at first glance, an obvious place to witness a miracle. None the less, the mood at the charmless Sava Centre this week has been just as extraordinary, in some ways, as the dramatic events on the streets.

Djordje Balasevic is a

forty-something singer with

receding hair and an amiable air

of scruff. A very European mixture

of chansonnier and raconteur

— try mixing Georges

Brassens and Billy Connolly

and see what you get. In Serbia,

he has long been enormously

popular. His songs are lyrical,

peppered with irony — sex,

drink, pain. He has been singing

for 20 years, and his following

includes both the middle-aged

and the young. In the past, he

has been part of the staple diet of Belgrade television.

But, as this week's concert made clear, no longer. More changes will have to take place in Serbia before Balasevic again becomes the television bosses' favourite. Balasevic delivered non-stop contempt for the government of Slobodan Milosevic — its crassness, warmongering, hypocrisy, riot police, and its dead-end lack of policy. The 4,000-strong audience adored it. Old and young, they blew whistles, cheered, cried, and sat bewitched. And, above all, they laughed.

And that was the real miracle: the happiness in the hall. This was an evening of Serbian innocence. In recent years, Serbia has drowned in its own myths, always blaming others for its misfortunes. But that is no longer the only Serbia.

Balasevic chattered on, with tales of Milosevic, of politics, and of Balasevic's travels — most recently, to Britain. He described applying for the visa, the questions at Heathrow, and how he got into small-talk when he finally arrived. A new ac-



Front line: A young boy stands between riot police at a demonstration in Belgrade yesterday organised by the opposition Zajedno movement

Photograph: Reuters

quaintance asked where he was from. "Xedvarqia," came Balasevic's mumbled reply. Asked again, he repeated: "Xedq-zlavia" ... I somehow found that I had a big chocolate in my

mouth," he told the packed hall on Wednesday night. Then, he was asked a third time: "Sorry, where did you say?" "Yir-goslavia!" he finally declared, with a confident roar. There was

laughter and recognition in the hall — recognition of the possibility that Serbs may finally get past their shame, and regain the identity which Slobodan Milosevic has made it so difficult for

a self-respecting Serb to declare.

In one of the few explicitly political songs, Balasevic sang of the "bad guys, pessimists, lunatics and psychopaths who destroyed everything". But he

emphasised, too, that this has not been a war which the Serbs can simply push to one side. "The generals and moustachioed majors — they are not guilty," he sang. "They just said: 'Fire', and pulled the triggers. We are guilty, because we were silent." The hall erupted in applause.

For many at the concert, it was the changes in people's heads which gave most reason for optimism — not the concessions that the authorities appeared to make this week in recognising opposition election victories. Jelena Brkajacic, a

26-year-old biologist, was more optimistic than she had ever been about the prospects for a different Serbia. "Just a few months ago, I was desperate. I said to my husband: 'Nothing will ever get me on the streets again'. It was too depressing. Nothing ever changed." The atmosphere of Wednesday's concert was "completely different", she said, from concerts in previous years. Her husband, Bojan, added: "Suddenly, we've got hope. Much has happened. But much more will happen, that's what counts. That makes us feel good."

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Court rebuffs Milosevic

Steve Crawshaw

A Serb court yesterday rebuffed the ruling Socialist Party by reconfirming an opposition victory in elections in the industrial town of Nis in November.

The slap-down provided the latest indication that street protests against the regime have opened up new and potentially lethal splits in the establishment. Until recently, it would have been unthinkable for a Serb court to rule against the party of Slobodan Milosevic.

An electoral commission this week overturned a previous annulment of an opposition victory in the capital, Belgrade. The opposition still expects the Socialist Party (the former Communist Party) to appeal against the ruling. Opposition sources argued yesterday that Mr Milosevic is "playing for time".

Street protests against the refusal to recognise the opposition victories in Belgrade and other cities continued nationwide. The demonstrations, which began after elections two months ago yesterday, are no longer gaining the momentum which

might make an early denouement inevitable. But nor are they fading away.

In the words of one opposition official, "the authorities are in complete disarray". Army commanders have expressed unhappiness that force might be used against the demonstrators. There are splits within the Socialist Party, between reformers pressing for change and hardliners who want to batter down the hatches.

The police, too, are no longer necessarily reliable. One regional police chief has suggested that the busting in of policemen to the capital for "demo duty" is counter-productive for the regime. "After a week spent in Belgrade, they get contaminated. They talk to the demonstrators, they listen to B92 [opposition] radio. And then they take the contamination back home."

Renewed international support for the opposition came with the announcement that the German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, has invited Zoran Djindjic, one of the leaders of the opposition coalition, for talks in Bonn.

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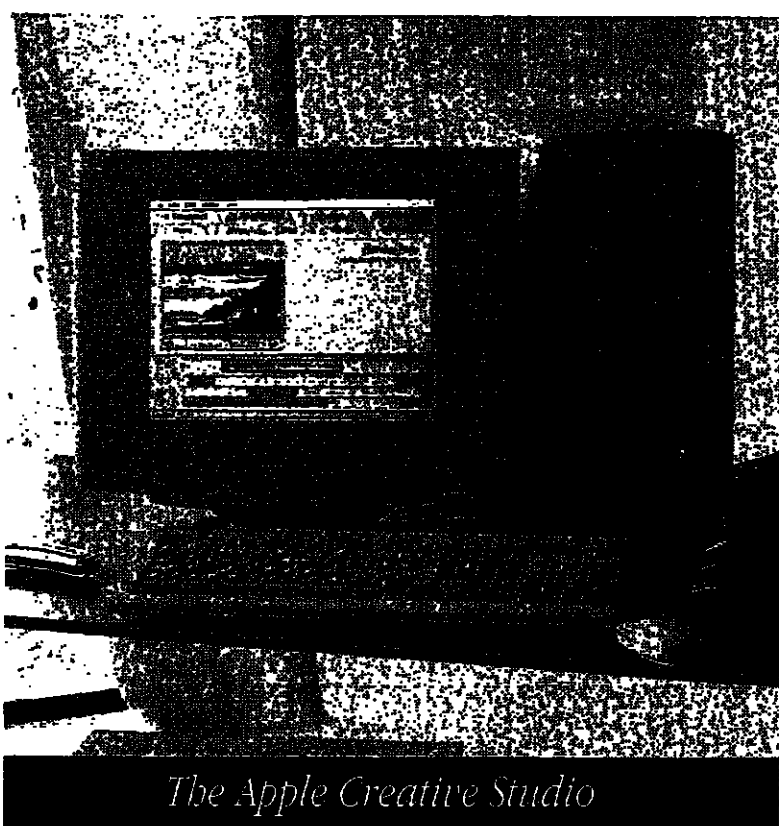
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Gingrich clings on after fine of \$100,000

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Amid confusion and unrelenting partisan feuding, the ethics controversy surrounding Newt Gingrich moved towards a climax yesterday, as the Speaker agreed to pay a \$100,000-plus fine, and Congress prepared to release an independent counsel's reportedly scathing report on his ethical transgressions.

Three days before President Bill Clinton's second inauguration, political Washington was living two simultaneous lives - gearing up for the festivities that accompany America's four-yearly equivalent of a coronation, yet transfixed by the drama over the fate of Mr Gingrich.

A month after he admitted breaching House rules and then, in effect, lying about it to his peers, Mr Gingrich and his Republican supporters were adamant he would stay. But for the first time, a Speaker has been reprimanded and will pay what is described as a "six-figure penalty".

Televised public hearings on Capitol Hill into the report by the committee's independent counsel, James Cole, were to be held yesterday afternoon, before a final vote on Mr Gingrich's punishment not later than Tuesday. Technically, a reprimand was almost the lightest of the possible sanctions. It will not require him to step down and some Republican backbenchers wish to reduce it to a virtually meaningless "reproof".

But it was not clear whether Mr Cole would demand further investigation by the Justice Department into the purportedly improper use of tax-exempt contributions by the Speaker - the offence at the heart of the charges against him. If so, his tribulations will not be over.

In the short-term, the Republicans have emerged as clear

winners from a week of savage political warfare, by delaying the potentially embarrassing hearings to the last moment, when they will be obscured by the inauguration.

The Democrats dealt their cause a blow by leaking transcripts of an illegally eavesdropped telephone conversation between Mr Gingrich, his lawyers and top Republicans about his predicament. That triggered a separate FBI investigation of the leak, turning the spotlight to Democratic sins.

Such is the fevered climate in the US Capitol, in whose shadow President Clinton will take the oath of office for the second time at noon on Monday. At the White House, however, all is sweetness and bipartisanship ahead of the big day.

In a moving ceremony, Mr Clinton yesterday awarded the country's highest civilian honour, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, to his vanquished Republican opponent of last November, Bob Dole, speaking of the huge debt owed by the country to the former Senate Majority leader. Mr Dole responded with characteristic wit.

"I Robert J Dole..." he began in a mock recitation of the inaugural oath he had hoped to be taking on Monday, before breaking off. "Sorry - wrong speech." After the laughter had subsided, however, Mr Dole came close to tears as he singled out an old comrade-in-arms in the audience who had helped save him after his wounding in Italy in the Second World War.

The occasion was designed to send a message that Mr Clinton will work constructively with the Republican majority in Congress, whatever the bickering over Mr Gingrich. That strategy is paying off. Mr Clinton's personal approval rating, according to a CNN poll yesterday, was a best-ever 62 per cent.



Hogging the limelight: A piglet looks into the photographer's lens at the Green Week Fair in Berlin, the biggest agricultural fair in Europe, putting farming products and livestock on display. Photograph: AP

SA 'dove' implicated in apartheid-era dirty tricks

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

From hawk to dove, declared a jubilant press two years ago when General George Meiring, leader of the apartheid government's war against the African National Congress, became part of the miracle of South Africa's peaceful transition.

Yesterday, in a previously suppressed report, General Meiring - the man who in spite of his past was chosen by President Nelson Mandela to oversee the creation of a national defence force for the new South Africa - was implicated with more than 60 officers and soldiers in apartheid-era dirty tricks, including state-sponsored murder.

The revelation was made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which also sug-

gested that former president FW de Klerk orchestrated a cover up while still in power in 1992 by refusing to investigate charges against General Meiring and two other generals. Kat Liebenberg and Joffel van der Westhuizen, despite the conclusions of an investigation by General Pierre Steyn.

General Steyn, then a lieutenant-general, was appointed by Mr de Klerk to investigate allegations that a shadowy Third Force was destabilising the country through covert violent operations designed to discredit and divide the liberation forces. He probed train violence, assassinations, gun running, drug smuggling and cross-border raids.

Instead of investigating the three generals, as General Steyn specifically recommended, Mr de Klerk asked them to take a look at Steyn's list and

come up with one of their own. Twenty-three men were eventually sent packing. But yesterday's TRC announcement confirmed widespread suspicion that the purging of the old guard has been limited.

Charles Villa-Viecenio, the TRC's head of research, said General Steyn believed that during his investigations far more effort was expended by the armed forces and the police on covering up and identifying leaks than on gathering evidence. Despite explicit instructions, police and armed forces documents were destroyed.

Yesterday, Alex Boraine, the TRC's deputy chairman, said Mr de Klerk's actions at the time were extraordinary. "It seems a strange way to get at the truth," he added. He also said that the TRC now held the report Mr de Klerk had previously

denied existed in written form. Mr Boraine plans to hold talks with Defence Minister Joe Modise and General Meiring. "It will be interesting to hear what Mr de Klerk has to say when he appears before the commission later this year," he said.

A defence force spokesman said he could not comment on the charges against General Meiring until the force had had time to study the report.

A spokesman for Mr de Klerk said that the commission was making a deliberate attempt to damage de Klerk, who now leads the national party in opposition. He said the TRC's claims were seriously misleading and that Mr de Klerk did not have strong enough evidence to take drastic measures against the highest ranking officers at what was then a delicate stage in the transition process.

significant shorts

Prescott vows to help ease HK handover

John Prescott, the Labour deputy leader, winding up a visit to Peking, said: "We want [the transition of Hong Kong] to go well, whether it is under a Tory government or a Labour government, and we'll do all we can to see that is achieved." His trip to China was "a matter of updating ourselves" on preparations for the transition. He is due in Hong Kong on Monday, where he hopes to renew his acquaintance with Tung Chee-Hwa, set to be chief executive of Hong Kong when the Union flag is finally lowered on 30 June. *Teresa Poole - Peking*

Sudan denies losing key town to insurgents

Sudan denied the fall of Maban into rebel hands on the southern front of the Blue Nile region, an area where a Swiss-based relief group said Sudanese troops were bombing and burning to drive out the rebels. Sudanese rebels in Asmara and Cairo said a joint rebel force had captured the town, which they say is a strategic bypass for the White Nile state, Upper Nile and the Blue Nile region. *Reuters - Cairo*

Taliban claim big advance

Afghanistan's Islamic Taliban militia said they had captured parts of Kapisa province, north-west of Kabul and that a Taliban fighter had shot down a warplane of the opposition alliance with a US-made Stinger missile. *Reuters - Mir Bacha Kot*

US Air Force gets a rocket

A McDonnell Douglas Delta 2 rocket carrying a \$55m (£34m) US Air Force navigational satellite apparently exploded as it blasted off from Cape Canaveral. "I heard the main explosion and after that I heard three, four, more minor explosions and more smoke and more fireballs," said Kurt Ronstrom, who was photographing the blast-off. *Reuters - Cape Canaveral*

Dutch hit by abortion row

The Health Minister, Els Borst, said she can imagine circumstances under which Dutch doctors may legally abort a foetus if it is not the sex the mother wants. Her comment, for broadcast on television, followed a documentary in which a doctor said he would do an abortion for a woman who said she wanted it "because it was raining." *AP - The Hague*

Police profile on Cosby's killer

The gunman who killed the son of the entertainer Bill Cosby was at the crime scene momentarily, and investigators are preparing a composite sketch of the attacker. Police say Ennis William Cosby, 27, may have been the victim of a roadside robbery attempt after he stopped to fix a flat tyre, although nothing apparently was taken. *AP - Los Angeles*

Zimbabwe atrocity claim

A retired corporal from President Robert Mugabe's notorious North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade will seek compensation for mental trauma which he says he suffered carrying out atrocities in the 1980s.

The planned lawsuit by the man, whose identity has not been disclosed, could help uncover details of Mr Mugabe's campaign against an uprising in the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe.

Thousands of people were believed killed to have been by government forces which were seeking to root out dissenters, though Mugabe has previously prevented information about the campaign from being made public. *AP - Harare*

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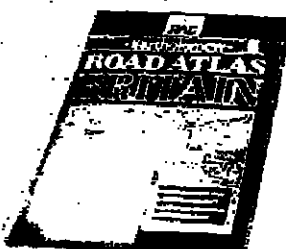
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international

Kremlin prepares for life after Yeltsin

Russian politicians are already jockeying for the ailing president's job

Phil Reeves
Moscow

Like him or loathe him, Boris Yeltsin is an extraordinary survivor. A mixture of ruthless bullying, shrewd tactics and luck has helped him weather a bloody showdown with parliament, heart attacks, a quintuple bypass operation, a slaughterous war in Chechnya, and a re-election campaign which he entered with ratings that looked like the IQ of an earthworm. Yet, after all this, suspicion is sweeping through Moscow that his days are drawing to a close.

As he struggles to overcome double pneumonia, even his admirers privately concede that Mr Yeltsin will soon be forced to acknowledge that he is no longer well enough to remain in charge of the largest country on the planet.

More than six months have elapsed since he was re-elected for his final term; he has been absent for most of that time. Although he may well recover from his present illness, few expect him to complete his full term. He is ill, worn out and, by Russian standards, old - seven years above the average male life expectancy.

The mood is hard to pinpoint with facts, yet it is palpable. When Mr Yeltsin had yet another bout of heart trouble last summer, his entourage was bullish, angrily debunking reports that he could not work more than 15 minutes a day. The president was beavering away on documents, they insisted.

This time, there is far more gloom. The Kremlin's spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhemsky, is going through the paces, reas-

suring the world that his boss is getting better. But the Kremlin doctors have sounded increasingly wary. What was described 10 days ago as "early signs of pneumonia" is now referred to as double pneumonia triggered by bronchitis, an "unpredictable" condition that can bring complications later on.

Once-loyal newspapers that kept quiet about Mr Yeltsin's health during his election campaign now sound alarmed. An editorial in *Izvestia* described him as "clearly seriously ill" and expressed concern about the stability of the country. When the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, declared yesterday that Russia's reforms would continue, he was almost assuming the absence of Mr Yeltsin.

And there are signs that the political establishment is preparing for life after Boris. For instance, a debate has begun about whether the Russian constitution, forced into law by Mr Yeltsin in 1993, places too much power in the hands of one man. Consensus is growing in favour of the views of Yegor Stroyev, speaker of parliament's upper house and a staunch Yeltsin supporter, who has called for an amendment giving more power to parliament, arguing that "the constitution is not an icon".

Mr Stroyev's concern is not that his friend, Mr Yeltsin, will abuse his powers. What worries him, and many others, is the use to which they may be put by his successor. Looming ominously into view is Alexander Lebed, the former paratrooper general who is the favourite to win an election if one were called soon.

If there is one Russian who appears confident that Mr Yeltsin is about to exit, it is Mr Lebed. In the three months since he was sacked as national security adviser, after securing a peace deal in Chechnya, his appetite for the presidency has grown sharper. When he discovered Mr Yeltsin was bed-ridden again, he moved his campaign up a gear, calling repeatedly for the president to quit. "I want to become president, and I will," he announced, before setting off on a trip to Germany.

Having lost badly to Mr Yeltsin, the Communists and nationalists do not want to be humiliated at the ballot box, especially by someone who could take their grassroots vote. Many in government do not relish a president who threatens to root out official corruption, and take control of foreign trade - a source of many fortunes.

Should an election be called, the Kremlin would almost certainly try to throttle Mr Lebed's media access and throw money at their chosen candidate. But the general would still have a strong chance of victory, especially if he were perceived by the public as a victim of the establishment. "Every segment of the Russian political elite would stand to lose a great deal if Lebed were to win... an election," wrote Andrei Piontkovsky, head of Moscow's Centre for Strategic Studies, in the *Moscow Times*.

It is for this reason that the Communist-dominated lower house of parliament has been quietly building bridges with the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, cooperating with his move to pass a federal budget. It is also no coincidence that an ardent political enemy of Mr Yeltsin, Oleg Ruminanov, has floated the idea of another constitutional amendment - a law allowing prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to stand in for the sick president for 18 months (instead of the current three) before calling an election. The apparition who runs Russia hope that, by then, Mr Lebed will be forgotten.



Fade away: Mr Yeltsin on the election trail last summer (left). In November he was visibly ailing (centre) and underwent quintuple bypass surgery, but has not recovered (right)

Lebed claims Clinton backing



With doubts surrounding Boris Yeltsin's future, Alexander Lebed (above) believes that he has already acquired evidence of official recognition in Washington - a treasured invitation to Monday's swearing-in of Bill Clinton, from none other than the US President himself.

His claim caused furrowed brows in the White House, which is denying that the self-styled president-in-waiting is a guest of the United States. Confusion surrounded Mr Lebed's claim, but he may have been invited by an individual member of Congress.

The US - with a weather eye to the future - has chosen its words carefully. Asked what it would do if Mr Lebed attends, Mike McCurry, White House spokesman, said Mr Clinton "will not be embarrassed and would not be offended". He added: "It would strike him as curious, but he is not in control of the people who are awarded tickets to the ceremony."

Foreigners drive into Moscow road trap

Phil Reeves
Moscow

The world has always had its responsible motorists (the British) and its lunatics (the Italians), and until now no foreign visitor to Moscow had any doubts where to place the Russians.

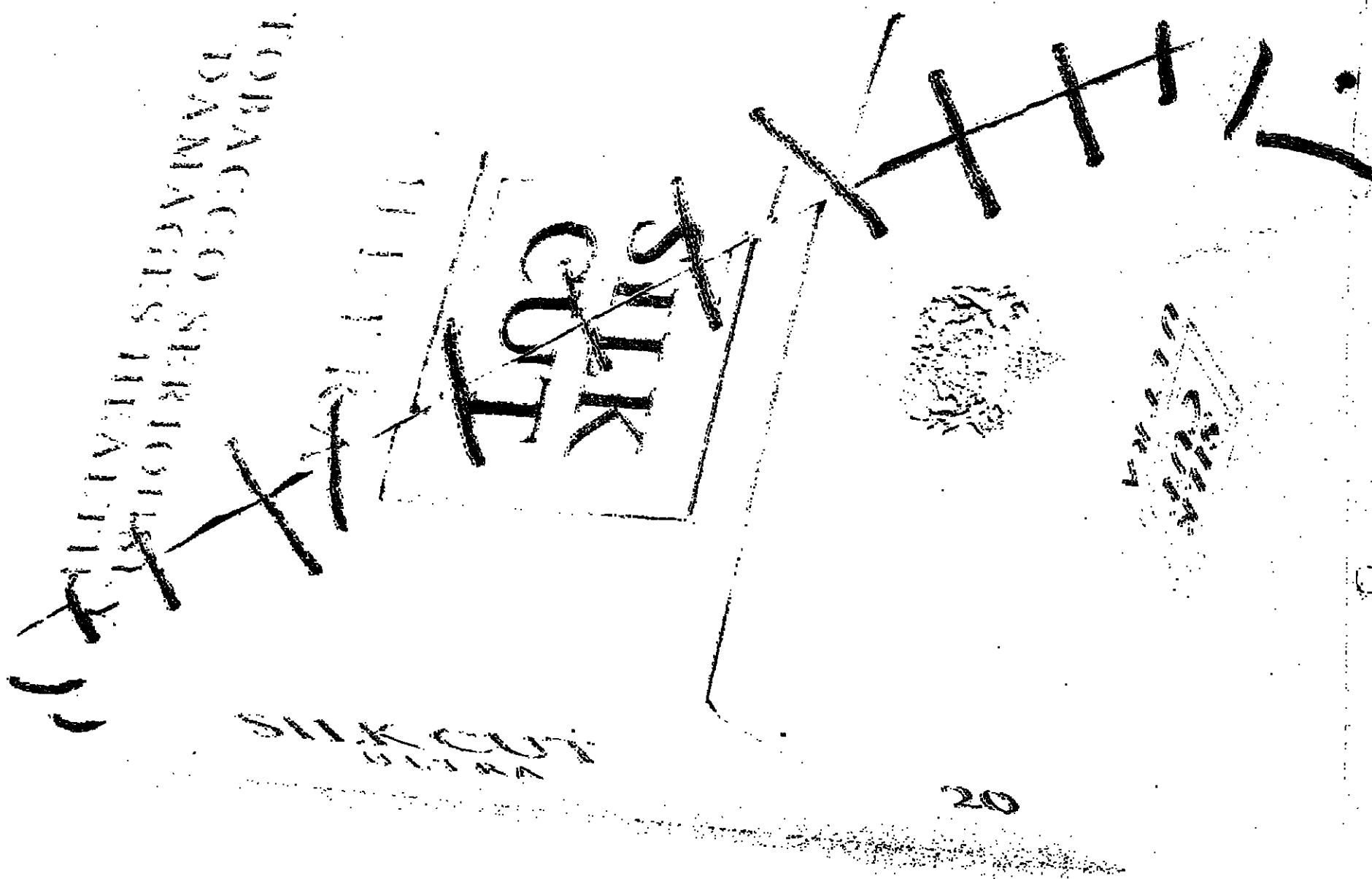
One trip amid the dented, smog-spewing vehicles that clutter round the capital is usually enough to convince newcomers that this is a place where the rules of the road are taken with a pinch of salt, and sometimes a glass of vodka.

So eyebrows were raised among the thousands of foreign diplomats and business executives in the city when Moscow's traffic police released details of the worst offenders among the foreigners. Their evidence is the result of a police clamp-down which is widely believed as a counter-attack after an inci-

dent in New York in which the Russians claim several of their diplomats were man-handled by traffic police, who alleged the envoys were drunk and unruly.

The dispute escalated this week when the New York police issued two tickets on one day to Russia's ambassador to the UN.

Under "Operation Foreigner", the city's police were instructed to stop and check foreign cars for two days. Every police officer knows that diplomats have red numberplates and other foreigners have yellow ones. One thousand vehicles were flagged down. The police banned 26 from the road, fined 52, and detected a mere 200 driving violations. And the results of their survey? The worst offenders were the Americans, followed by the French, the British and the Vietnamese. Italians abroad, it seems, are relatively well-behaved.



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IMAGE OF THE WEEK

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As the churches seek to respond to this challenge, I believe that for many people the place to start is simply with a sense of wonder. Archbishop Michael Ramsey used to say that 'there is a space within each of us which only God can fill'. It is, I believe, innate in all human beings to have a sense of transcendence and of wonder. It is experienced in many ways, including, but not limited to, religious contexts. It may be when you fall in love, and suddenly the whole world is transformed. It may be to hold a new-born child, or at key moments in family life. It can be true when you are present with someone as

These moments, when the world is transfigured with special meaning, illustrate and embody the human potential to know God. That potential, and these moments, bubble irrefreably up in human existence, but in doing so they have to fight against the tendency in western culture to cash everything out in analytical lumps, to be examined and dissected. The desire to know can become self-destructive, if it does not recognise its own limits, and the things that pass beyond knowledge. We are living in the midst of a new industrial revolution, driven by the amazing possibilities of information technology. In human affairs, information should serve knowledge, and knowledge should serve the higher purposes of wisdom. When mere information, no matter how sophisticated or entertaining the

I can remember the shock of the death in 1961 of that remarkable Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, in a plane crash. In the world of the early 1960s, drifting ever deeper into the cold war, he stood out as a beacon of hope. He wrote this in his personal diary: "God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a

For all that has been – Thanks!
For all that shall be – Yes!

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Catching the doodle bug

How to read a person's character from their absent-minded squiggles

STOP. Read no further. Go away, get bored, and do some doodles on a blank sheet of paper. For doodles – according to some graphologists at any rate – may hold the key to your personality. The underlying idea of graphology is simple: writing is an automatic action controlled by your subconscious. Whether you loop your letters or angle them, how you join them together, how you spread them over the blank page, indeed every tiny twitch of your writing fingers may betray something of your inner turmoil.

While the finer points of graphology have never stood up to hard scientific testing, its basic premise is hard to deny – as anyone who has ever received a letter written in scrawling block capitals in green ink will confirm. So while we would not go so far as to claim absolute validity for what follows, it may be worth taking some notice of it.

Doodles done then while I was boring you with the last paragraph? Then on with the interpretation.

The first thing to look for is the position of the doodle of the page: extraneous doodle on the middle of the paper, showing their need to be at the centre of things. Doodling at the left is sign of worry and fear for what the future may hold; doodling on the right shows impulsiveness; high doodles betray impracticality and doodles at the foot of the paper warn of depression.

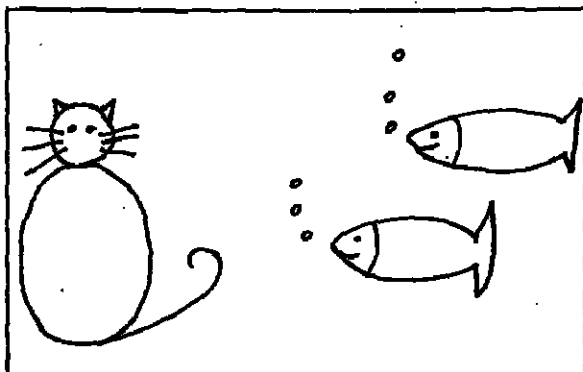
Next comes pressure: turn the paper over and hold it up to the light. Can you see a firm impression made by your pen or pencil? Assertive people push hard with their pens; sensitive, submissive doodlers doodle softly.

On to your inner spikiness: curvy doodles are a sign of sociability, angular doodles, they say, are a sign of detachment and poor interpersonal skills.

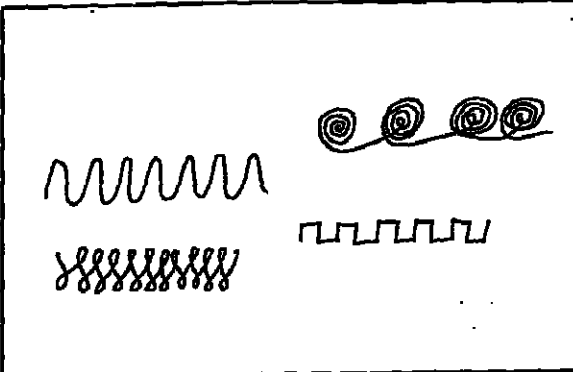
Now look for regularity and patterns: the more disciplined your doodle, the better organised you are likely to be – though squares and triangles, in the absence of curves, may indicate a lack of emotion and sensitivity. Take care also if you have been producing those obsessively tidy, walled-in, cross-hatched, knotted-together doodles that can only be interpreted as showing a need to break out. And while piles of bricks may indicate regularity and discipline, beware if they are inverted pyramids, all balancing tenuously on a small base. That's a sure sign that you fear that your world is about to topple over.

So far it seems to make fair sense. The doodleological assertion that arrows, staircases and ladders are signs of ambition also seems rational, until you begin to wonder how to tell whether a ladder is going up or down, and whether the arrow is "Collect £200" or "Go to Jail".

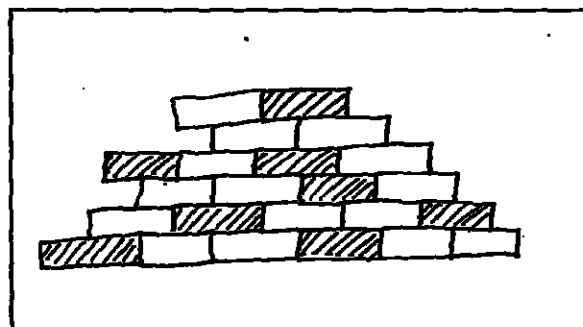
Pictures and faces bring further problem areas. Pictures of food may indicate hunger or over-eating, they say, while attractive faces may show sociability and ugly faces indicate suspicion and bad temper. After that, the theory of "You are what you draw" may become



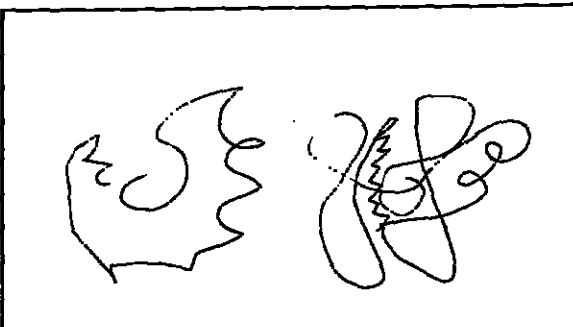
Doodles of cats, fish and other small creatures may be a sign of a protective nature



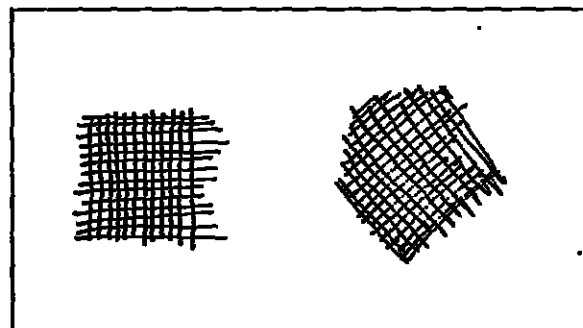
Repetitive doodles show concentration, perseverance and a patient nature



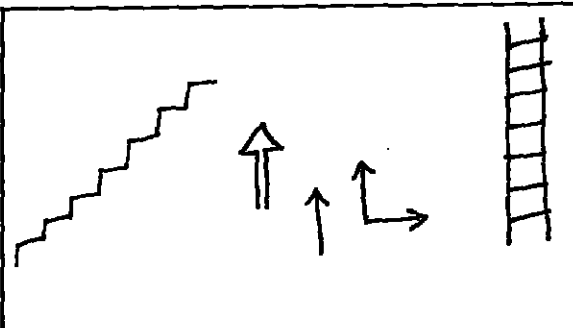
Regular geometric shapes indicate a desire for organisation – but watch out for unstable piles of bricks



Abstract squiggles may be a sign of tension and poor concentration



Bars and cross-hatching may hide a feeling of constriction and a desire to escape



Arrows, ladders and stairs all point towards ambition and a need for achievement

ever more facile: houses indicate domesticity, hearts show romanticism, planes and cars a desire to travel. A good deal of research has been done on the sex of any people seen in drawings. Results are inconclusive on whether people are more likely to draw pictures of their own or the opposite sex, but male adolescents have been shown to be more likely to draw nude women than nude men. Putting it all together, we arrive at the following definitive rules for doodle interpretation:

1. When interpreting other people's doodles, speak in broad generalities mixed with subtle personal insights. "You feel constricted by the pressures other people bring to bear on you" is always a good line.
2. Never show anyone else any of your own doodles. (For those with Internet access, more doodles may be found at: <http://www.unakoren.com/doodles.html>)

William Hartston

Christmas Crossword competition – answers and winners

Cryptic solution: Across: 1 Glad Tidings Of Great Joy 1 Bring, 15 Glade, 16 Rover, 17 A Christmas Carol, 18 Castle, 19 Loose, 20 Abuse, 21 Steep, 22 Orchestrating, 23 Sackbut, 24 Grit, 25 Sherdian Islands, 26 Light, 27 Imbue, 28 Rhomb, 29 Incubated, 30 Elopement, 31 Assurance, 32 Competed, 33 Beatific, 34 Instance, 35 Startles, 36 Charmaine, 37 Eruption, 38 Persistent, 39 Night, 40 Ashen, 41 Prone, 42 Hair Conditioner, 43 Dill, 44 Trachoma, 45 Generalissimo, 46 Detract, 47 Ennui, 48 Grist, 49 Braise, 50 Throw In The Cards, 51 Union, 52 Ivory, 53 Sir He Lives A Good League Hence.
Down: 1 Gage, 2 Avalanche, 3 Trestle, 4 Dirge, 5 Novella, 6 Sartorial, 7 Flare, 8 Rehearses, 9 Animalcule, 10 Jitter Bugged, 11 Years, 12 Backer, 13 Irreparable, 14 Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 15 Conservative Candidates, 16 Tension, 17 Gendarmier, 18 Tetrode, 19 Diverment, 20 Librarian, 21 Inches, 22 Ouse, 23 Locate, 24 Everlasting, 25 Sepsis, 26 Flap, 27 Screen, 28 Clipper, 29 Ant Hill, 30 Anton Chekhov, 31 Upholsterer, 32 Reconnaissance, 33 Hearth Rug, 34 Continual, 35 Nails Down, 36 Resina, 37 Spanish, 38 Yahweh, 39 Tonal, 40 Gusto, 41 Bantu, 42 Byre.

Concise solution: Across: 1 Dissolution Of The Monasteries, 15 Tenet, 16 Salut, 17 Self Development, 18 Aghast, 19 Gabby, 20 Molar, 21 Riotous, 22 Negative Poles, 23 Overhang, 24 Style,

30 Electric Shavers 33 Salvo, 34 Thorn, 35 Lire, 37 Enamellist, 40 Solocins, 42 Gutter, 43 Prologue, 44 Estimate, 47 Noontide, 48 Trekks, 49 Stretcher, 53 Exemplary, 55 Broadsword, 56 At Sea, 58 Extol, 59 Final, 60 Fellow Traveller, 63 Aunt, 64 Editions, 65 Draughtboards, 69 Travail, 71 Eases, 72 Mogul, 73 Latent, 75 Experimentalist, 76 Agent, 77 Often, 78 The Importance Of Being Earnest.
Down: 1 Date, 2 Synagogue, 3 Outcast, 4 Upset, 5 Icing Up, 6 Notabilia, 7 Fussy, 8 Hale Moons, 9 Middle East, 10 Nevertheless, 11 Solar, 12 Expose, 13 Ice Stations, 14 Set Someone's Fears At Rest, 22 Intelligence Department, 24 Vainest, 25 Steelworker, 27 Noodles, 29 Stick In Trade, 31 The North Pole, 32 Swains, 36 Tango, 38 Expert, 39 Stonewalled, 41 Pulses, 45 Aphid, 46 Escort, 48 Dwarfed, 51 Radiant, 52 Tying The Knot, 54 Eating Apple, 57 Bloodstain, 60 Fish Slice, 61 Orangeade, 62 Lorgnette, 66 Galleon, 67 Outdoor, 68 Marram, 70 Limbo, 72 Motif, 73 Lathe, 74 Gnat.
Winners: The two first prizes, copies of the A & C Black, OUP Who's Who 1897-1996 on CD-Rom, were won by I Matheson of Storraway and Mrs E Kelly of Purley. Runners-up, receiving the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations: J Goodyear, Chardstock; C & C Blare, St Andrews; K McAndrews, Heaton; Mr J Wood, Ulverston; Mrs M Kinch, Bradford-on-Avon; Alan Scott, Scot-

slown; G Price, Aberystwyth; Reginald Kilby, Coventry; Mr & Mrs R Stunthies, Llandrindod Wells; Francis Fitzgibbon, London NW5; Mrs E Harrington, London SE8; Mrs Gloria Fagg, Strumpshaw; R Luker, Caterham; A Horton, Maidenhead; Mr & Mrs P Reynolds, Morriston; P Finn, Gravesend; Tina Dixon, Warrington; J Atherton, Burwell; C Bloomfield, St Albans; Mr J Francis, Cuckfield.

Children's puzzle
Solution: Across: 1 Tortoise, 5 Puppet, 9 Meatball, 10 Sponge, 11 Hoist, 12 Interrupt, 14 Watership Down, 17 Foster-mothers, 20 Gone to sea, 21 Opera, 22 Spider, 23 Judokus, 24 Insist, 25 Peter Pan.
Down: 1 Tomahawk, 2 Realist, 3 Orbit, 4 Selfishness, 6 Uppermost, 7 Penguin, 8 Twenty, 13 Tape measure, 15 Rose trees, 16 Assassin, 17 Fancies, 18 Evens up, 19 Agassi, 21 Ozon.
Winners: The first prize, a copy of the nine volume Oxford Children's Encyclopedia, was won by Sarah Cooper, Chetwynd Middle School, Nuneaton. Runners-up, receiving The Young Oxford History of Britain and Ireland: Ben Watson, King's School, Cambridge; James Colville, Raughton Head Primary School; Amy Hodgson, Heron Hill School, Kendal; Jonathan Moore, Trinity Middle School, Newport; Charlotte Aitchison, Heathside School, Weybridge.

Games people play

Pandora Melly talks to a high-speed Sandy Gall

Sandy Gall, 69, writer/broadcaster

I play golf, which is not very exciting. Would you like to hear about the Cresta Run instead? It's a tobogganing run at St Moritz, invented by the British in the late 1890s. They went to Switzerland for their health – very often as a cure for tuberculosis – and to amuse themselves they took up tobogganing. Then someone had the idea of building a track out of snow and ice, which became the Cresta Run. It's rebuilt every winter, half-a-mile long with lots of curves and corners, down which the cream of British youth hurt themselves. Winston Churchill was the youngest rider ever – at 14, which is strictly against the rules.

It's a very serious business: the Cresta Run has killed five people. One man fell out at a big bend called "The Shuttlecock" and another hit a railway sleeper which had been left across the run instead of being put across the road to stop the traffic. I only mention this because the good

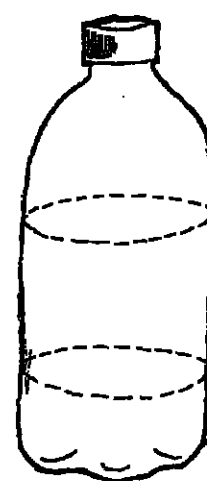
boys are travelling very fast: about 70 miles an hour towards the bottom of the run.

You lie on a toboggan and go down head first, steering by leaning into the corners. I'm a complete novice and very bad at it, but I used to toboggan in Scotland as a boy. I'd heard about the Cresta Run and eventually made two documentaries about it. I thought I'd have a go when we'd finished filming. We all went down, and I am ashamed to say that my cameraman and sound-recorder were much faster than me. Later, in the club-house, the announcer said: "Sandy Gall's time was so-and-so", and they told me that I was the slowest man since Errol Flynn. And he had stopped to light a cigarette.

Traditionally pre-Cresta courage may be obtained by mixing a chilled can of Campbell's Consommé (46p) with a large slug of Red Stolichnaya vodka (£12.19 from Oddbins). Experiment with proportions until audacity/vision/balance are at optimal levels.

Don't junk it... use it

The cola-powered plastic propagator



In the winter, a recycler's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of gardening, so here's how to turn a used soft-drink bottle into a safe and healthy environment for your seedlings.

Cut plastic bottle into three sections, as indicated by the dotted lines.

Fill the bottom section with gravel for drainage.

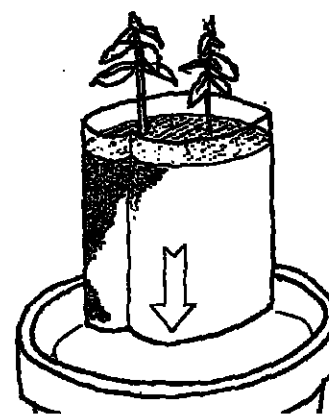
Make a sharp inward crease down the length of the middle section to make it a little thinner.

Leave the top section alone.

Now reassemble the bottle, squeezing the middle section to fit inside the rim of the bottom section.

Fill with potting or seed compost and plant your seeds.

Then replace the top section over your middle section to create a sun roof, protecting and warming the seedlings and preventing the compost from drying out.



When your seedlings are ready, pot them up by simply removing the middle section of the propagator and pushing the entire plug of compost and plants down into a flower pot.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

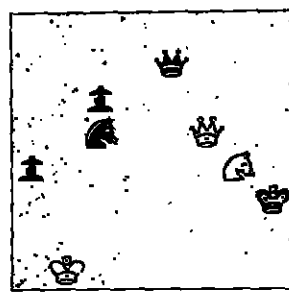
The Games Page is edited by William Hartston

Chess William Hartston

concise crossword

Bridge Alan Hiron

Backgammon Chris Bray



You're White, it's your move, and your opponent has just offered you a draw. What do you do?

The first thing to do, naturally enough, is to suspect his motives. Has he spotted some devastating discovered check with the knight? Probably not, since any knight move must be to a black square, where anything it attacks will be on a white square, so the black queen and knight are safe. On the other hand, 1.Nc3+ forces 1...Kg3 (1...Kh2 2.Qg4 mate or 1...Kh2 2.Qf2+ are fatal for Black) when only the

presence of the white queen on f5 stops White from delivering a devastating knight fork.

So perhaps, before accepting the draw offer, we should pursue this line 1.Nc3+ Kg3 2.Qg4+ Kf2 3.Qf4+ Ke2 but now what? Well, we can continue 4.Qf1+ since the knight is immune from capture (4...Kxe3 loses the queen to 5.Qe1+) so let's continue: 4...Kd2 5.Qd1+ Ke3 6.Qe2+. Now we seem to be getting somewhere since 6...Kd4 allows the knight fork on f5 that we've been waiting so long to play. So Black must play 6...Kb4 where 7.Qb2+ leads to mate after 7...Ka5 8.Nc4+ Ka6 9.Qb6. Ah, but Black plays 7...Nb3 instead shielding his king and getting out of trouble. Perhaps we'd better take that draw after all. Right?

Wrong! 8.Qa3+!! Kxa3 9.Nc2 is mate. (From a study by Leonid Kubbel).

Perplexity

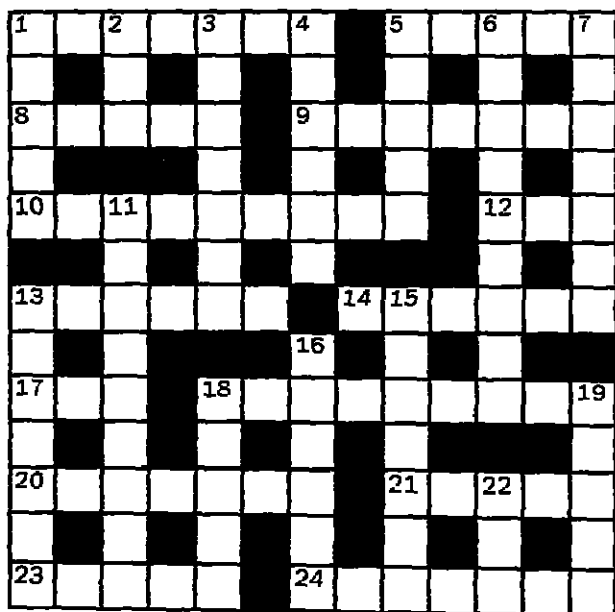
Mixed doubles:

Crave colossal lanky shingled mid-bovine shins

The six words in the above sentence hide the names of three people who have been in the news in the past week. To find them, you must group the words into three pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair. Each answer consists of a first name plus surname.

The first correct answer opened on 29 January will win a copy of the new Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. Answers to: Perplexity, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

No.3199 Saturday 18 January



ACROSS

- French composer (7)
- Make speech (5)
- Leather strap (5)
- Advance (7)
- Story-teller (9)
- Mineral deposit (3)
- Roman emperor (6)
- Help (6)
- Writing fluid (3)
- Building designer (9)
- Synthetic material (6)
- Burdened (5)
- Awe (5)
- Difficult (7)

DOWN

- Put off (5)
- Zodiac sign (3)
- Flower (7)
- Meal (6)
- Smell (5)
- Say sorry (9)
- Mountain (7)
- End of game (9)
- Cut hedge e.g. (7)
- Crash helmet (7)
- Shrub (6)
- Performed (5)
- Gripping implement for sugar-lumps (5)
- Twosome (3)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Trest, 4 Passing (Trespasing), 8 Electra, 9 Lisle, 10 Tides, 11 Undress, 13 Free, 15 Popover, 17 Scotch, 20 Loth, 22 Jockies, 24 Aroma, 26 U-turn, 27 Rainbow, 28 Teeters, 29 Entry, DOWN: 1 Trevelin, 2 Emerald, 3 Satisty, 4 Plaque, 5 Salad, 6 Inspect, 7 Guess, 12 Nest, 14 Reck, 16 Picture, 18 Chalice, 19 Headrow, 21 Ostric, 22 Jaunt, 25 Ernie, 26 Orbit.

In the first two questions of the Christmas Competition, you were asked to mark five possible solutions to bidding problems out of 10.

1) As South at love all, you held:

♠ A K Q 6
♥ 9 7 6 5 4 3 2
♦ 4
♣ K

West North East South
1♣ pass 1♥
pass 1♠ pass ?

The choices offered were 3♣, 4♠, 2♠, 3♠ and 4♠ which I rate as worth 2, 6, 10, 7 and 8 points out of 10 respectively.

The trouble with the direct spade raises is that they both seem underbids. If partner is short in hearts, there could easily be a slam but, as he clearly has very poor spades, it is most unlikely that he will be able to cooperate. 3♣ certainly has the merit of agreeing spades but, by suggesting some length in clubs, might easily cause partner to misvalue his hand, especially if he has, say, three small cards in the suit. 4♠, a splinter showing club shortage and healthy spade support, is nearer the mark but will still make it difficult for North. If you tell him that you are short in clubs, he may well not realise that you are equally short in diamonds.

On balance, I would plump for 2♠ – the fourth suit and forcing. As the South hand is difficult (impossible?) to describe, why not give North plenty of room to tell you what he holds? You might, for example, hear enthusiasm for hearts: the other options would have effectively ruled out the chance of playing in anything other than spades.

2) As South, with East-West vulnerable, you held

♠ none
♥ J 10 7 4
♦ Q J 10 8
♣ K Q 6 4 2

West North East South
2♣ 2♠ 4S ?

North's 2♠ is a Multi – either a West Two in a major or a strong three-suited hand. The suggested possibilities were 5♥, 6♥, 7♥, 5♠ and 4NT. Few players will agree with me in this guessing game, but I rate their respective points as 6, 4, 2, 8 and 10.

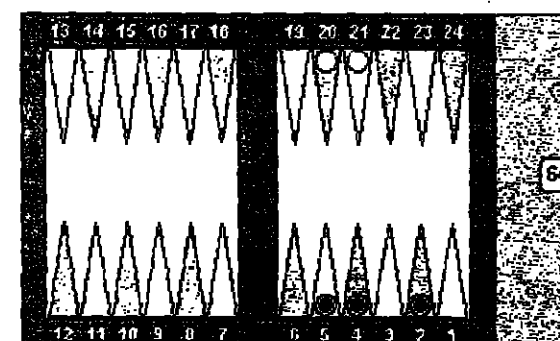
Here you have to make a big assumption – has partner got a Weak Two in hearts? (a drawback of the Multi), 6 and 7♥ both seem rather wild, but may work well, while 5♥ sounds rather feeble. 5♠ is a nice idea for now West has to take a position at a high level, but I prefer 4NT. This caters for the (remote) possibility that partner is strong, and may well persuade West that his partner is pre-empting with very long spades and does not have too strong a defensive hand.

3) South, dealer at love all, held:

♠ A (Y) 8 6 4
♥ A J 8 5 3
♦ 7 4
♣ 2

You were asked what was the lowest value for (Y) in order to open the bidding. I shall be generous in the marking here: as long as you do not insist on (Y) being the king or queen, then full marks. I would start things off even if Y were the two! I am sure it pays off over the years if you hold both majors.

More answers, and all the winners, next week.



This was the first puzzle in our Christmas quiz: Black on roll, should he double? And should White accept?

This type of bear-off problem arises frequently and it is good to know how to cope with it. Hugh Sconyers, a top US player, has produced a set of CDs that give the exact answers to such problems where each side has fewer than nine men left. Unfortunately – or perhaps fortunately – you can't have a PC at your side when playing, so mere mortals have to resort to a little hard work to come up with the right answer.

Let's look at the take side first. To take a double White needs 25 per cent winning chances. Time for a little calculation: unless Black rolls 6-6, 5-5 or 4-4, White will have a chance to take off his two men with one roll – which he can do with 10 rolls (6-6, 5-5, 4-4, 3-3, 6-5, 5-6, 6-4, 4-6, 5-4, 4-5). He will have the chance to roll these numbers in 33/36 games and will win the game 9.2 times in 36 attempts (10 x 33/36). Winning nine games would give him the required 25 per cent so it is apparent that White has a take. He has additional chances because Black may not bear off his men in two rolls. In fact after rolls of 1-1, 2-1 and 3-1 for Black it is correct for White to redouble!

But all of this suggests that White has only a borderline take. So it should be clear that Black has a strong double. He will lose his market if he waits. Using the Hugh Sconyers CD mentioned above the equities for Black are 0.32 points if he waits, 0.46 points if he doubles. So the answer is double/take.

Of course, in real life things can be different. When I recently had this position I doubled and my opponent dropped. Thus I raised my equity from 0.46 points to 1 full point. This reinforces the view that most significant errors are made with the doubling cube. Solutions to problems 2 and 3, and names of the winners, will be given in subsequent weeks.

The stainless steel queen

There's a game that actors and directors play at rehearsals, one of those cod-psychological, role-assigning amusements that's meant to sharpen your performance. It's called "the Status Game" and the director... but let Lindsay Duncan tell it. "Well, the director gives you a status, from one to 10 - so a king or a ruler would be a 10 - and tells you which number you are, but no one knows the status of anyone else. Then you have to walk around the room as befits your status and, by the end of the exercise, you should have in theory formed a line going from 10 down to one, just by expressing rank. The secret is, of course, that the person with the highest status doesn't

intensely. It sounds so sickly-sweet and it's so limiting, but I can't be described as English anyway." She was born in Scotland. Her parents were working-class Scots from Glasgow and Edinburgh, who moved south when Lindsay was five or six, first to Leeds then Birmingham, where she grew up. "When people hear the way I speak, they think I'm from some comfortable middle-class background. But we didn't have a lot of money. We didn't have a telephone or a car. Both my parents spoke with Scottish accents. A lot of expressions they used were Scots army slang..." she adopted a sudden Iain Cuthbertson delivery - "They used to say, 'Kil na budgie?', meaning 'What time is it?' I don't know how

because you are, after all, the acting ASM..." What were the plays like? "Oh - French Without Tears, safe and popular stuff. Some of it was absolutely ghastly. Agatha Christie, detective plays. I remember one called *Public Mischief* - terrible stuff, recycled all the time. But in those days you were so excited about getting your Equity card, you'd do Agatha Christie until your eyes crossed to get the f***ing card." She pulled a stray blonde hair, reminiscently. "And also it was summer, and it was so mad - we were sleeping in the dormitory of a boys' public school, in this quaint little English seaside town locked somewhere between the Thirties and the Fifties. It was... heaven."

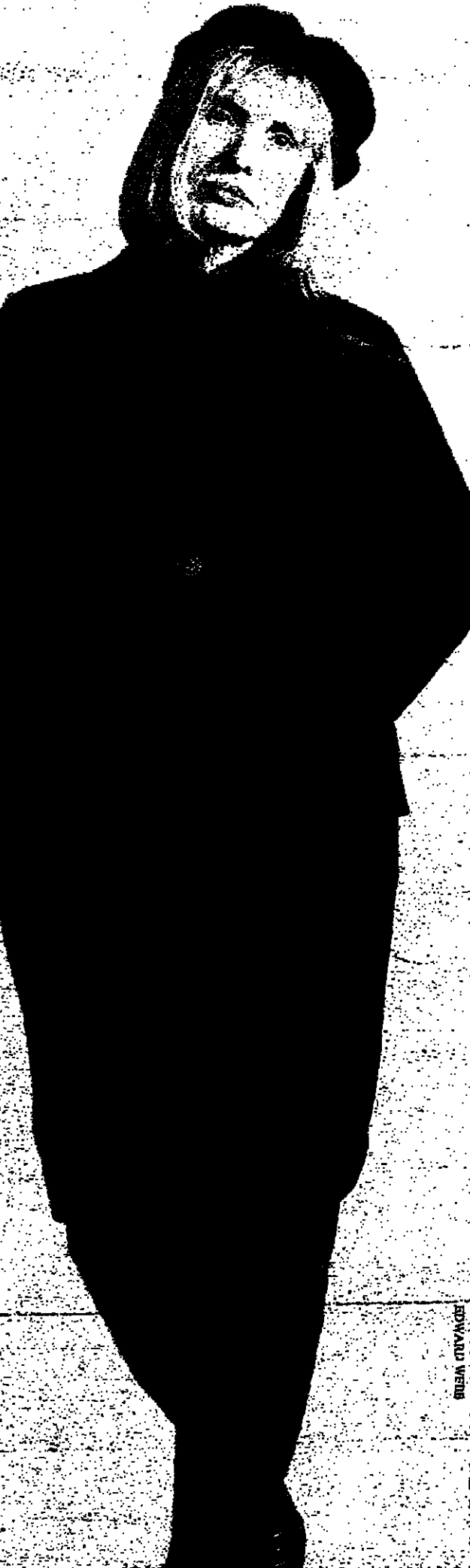
home, where his querulous, bullying father rules a spectacularly nasty roost and his brothers, Lenny and Joey, move in on his wife like rutting dogs. Ruth herself changes from nervous wife into sexual predator, apparently with designs on both brothers, if not the whole household. The men discuss her openly as a "scrubber" and "slut" and, by the time the curtain falls, Teddy has gone and Ruth remains - though whether as sex, slave, housekeeper or dominatrix, is never clear. Was it clear to her? Ms Duncan turned a slightly pitying smile towards me. "Not only do I understand it, I can't think of anything that makes more sense to me. I expect I'll have a lorryload of crap dumped on my head



John Walsh meets... Lindsay Duncan

do anything at all; just because their status means they don't have to try. It's a useful acting exercise because it teaches you that, if you're truly powerful because of your title or your personality or degree of confidence, you don't have to do anything. The more thrashing around you do, the more something is obviously missing with you..." Somebody must have whispered a number in Ms Duncan's ear at an early age - perhaps not a 10, but certainly a seven or eight. She's a woman who never seems in doubt of her status as a class act. On stage she radiates a passionate confidence, a feline concentration that leaves audiences breathless, whether in Tennessee Williams's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (for which she got the *Evening Standard's* Best Actress award) or as the decadent, scheming Marquise de Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (which transferred from the West End to New York, picking up en route an Olivier, a Tony and the impressively weighty "Theatre World Award for Outstanding New Talent"). On television she can do witty parts with docile conviction, playing the supportive-but-hopeless Mrs Peter Mayle in the BBC's doomed production of *A Year in Provence*, or the eponymous, free-thinking clerical spouse in Joanna Trollope's *The Rector's Wife*, and just as you think you've got her number - as a modern, blonde, Celia Johnson, put-upon-but-gorgeously resilient - she turns up in a spectacular passepied playing the female fatal Barbara in Alan Bleasdale's *GBH*, or as Al Pacino's mistress in *Glory*. She is by no means easy to typify. She spent much of last year abroad, on a five-month tour of America with the RSC's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which (scoring a definite 10 on the Richter scale of stardom) she played both Titania and Hypocrite, her husband, the actor Hilton McRae, came too with their five-year-old son, Cal. She returned to star in Harold Pinter's most recent playlet, *Makes a Man of You*, at the Royal Court last September. And next week, hardly drawing breath since she closed *Ashe*, she turns up in another Pinter production, this time his violent, creepy drama of dysfunctional madness and masochism, *The Homecoming*, which is in preview at the National Theatre. Sitting in the bar at the National, she is a month or so younger than her *Merteuil* but as intense as ever. She speaks of with gurgles and giggles, a mixture of mischief and mischief. "Ah, summer rep in Southwold. It was so completely different from drama school, where you'd sit in a room with ladies, changing rooms talking about cottage cheese and dieting and sex, and not doing enough work, and being too stupid to read books. In drama school, you were like 'Go!' - it's a terribly speedy lifestyle. Because you do a different play every week, you have to work on the next week's play all day, then perform at night, then learn your lines after the play - I don't know how, but when you're young you can do that - and you sew sofa covers

I spoke but it wasn't Scots or Birmingham. I can remember two friends of my older brother saying, 'Ooh, 'ere comes the Queen' because I spoke posh, but I don't know where it came from." How did her parents feel about producing a middle-class daughter? "Well, it's not an unfamiliar journey, is it? It happens a lot. You just get your hands on the best available education for your children. I got a lot of support from them, even though I went to an ordinary primary school." But was she aware of being culturally distant from her father? "It was so strange - like being brought up on parallel lines. My parents didn't belong in Birmingham. I didn't belong in Birmingham. I just longed for something else." Her escape was in daydreams, with two distinct plot lines. "I had a clear and long-running fantasy of being some kind of loosely defined royalty, a mysterious European princess, but I was also a detective in a mackintosh. We didn't have comics or a television in the house, so it must have come from the movies. We had family outings to the cinema every week. I must have started going when I was very small, because I remember taking my teddy bear along in a shopping bag." A later, and still-running fantasy, was to play a client on stage, "like that woman, what's her name, lying on top of the piano - Michelle Pfeiffer in *The Fabulous Baker Boy*. At some point you just have to open your mouth and let it run. It's all part of a fantasy about letting go." But can she actually sing? She smiled sweetly. "Only under hypnotherapy." Many people wonder how it was that Lindsay Duncan appeared as from nowhere in her mid-thirties, in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, reasoning that such an obvious star could not have gone unnoticed all through her twenties. Where had she been? She bridled a little. "It's no great mystery. I didn't get to drama school until I was 21. I did lots of weekly rep. I spent a chunk of time at the Royal Exchange, Manchester, when it opened, and I was doing great plays like *Top Girls* [by Caryl Churchill] at the Royal Court, which isn't exactly off the map."



'I had a clear and long-running fantasy of being some kind of loosely defined royalty. A mysterious European princess. But I was also a detective in a mackintosh'

Goodness. The sight of Ms Duncan in ecstasy is a most appealing one. And she has a way of slowing down her speech to a languorous crawl just this side of silence. (She enunciates the word "sex" as if entranced by the sound it makes: "sek... [two-second pause] ... ss.") It is perhaps the suggestion of sensuous appetite behind the regal sophistication that is her most potent weapon. Had she, by any chance, fallen in love with her director? She laughed with delight. "Hardly. The place was run by Sam, a Cambridge don who padded around in his plummies, very stiff in the joints, seemed about a hundred to me, and his wife Joan, who was an actress *manquer*. Every summer they came over from Cambridge and ran Southwold rep. She got all the leading parts in her age range and he directed her. Me, I had a completely obvious affair with another actor. It was a great summer. What else did you want?"

When she hit the big time, life speeded up. *Top Girls* took her to New York and Joseph Papp's Public Theatre when she was 31, the Royal Shakespeare Company took her on (she played Helen of Troy in *Troilus and Cressida* at Stratford), then the National Theatre, movies, television. She managed to survive a critical mauling that would have sent other actresses into permanent exile, when the BBC launched their misconceived *A Year in Provence*. "Pointless, useless, hopeless and useless" was one of the more positive judgments. When she starred as Anna, the Rector's Wife who gets a job stacking supermarket shelves as a blow for independence, you could feel the breath of middle England - all those super-protective Joanna Trollope fans - on her neck. "I had clergy wives who wanted to talk to me about it. They said, 'Don't let them soften it. I've never been involved in anything before where people approach you because they worry about how it's going to be done. So much for all the intellectual snobbery about Joanna Trollope. She's obviously got a direct line to an awful lot of people.'"

And now she's back in Pinter country, playing the Vivien Merchant role in the great playwright's 1965 domestic nightmare. "I couldn't have borne it, it's just *Ashe*," said Ms Duncan theatrically, "if I hadn't known I was doing *The Homecoming*. I'd have been terribly depressed and bereft. Pinter has this unmistakable voice - it's such a familiar landscape to me, it carries the ring of absolute authenticity. I just believe in his route through people."

Authenticity, eh? *The Homecoming*, like many a Pinter drama, starts materialistically, but sheers off into surreal and unsettling territory. Its thirtysomething young couple, Ruth (Duncan) and Teddy (Keith Allen), arrive back from America at Teddy's family

I shall have a small wager on Janet McTeer to beat her more illustrious rivals, Vanessa Redgrave, Diana Rigg and Eileen Atkins, to scoop the Olivier award for best actress next month. Her riveting and revelatory portrayal of Nora in *The Doll's House* took on an added dimension in the last performances. Struck down by the West End virus that has brought work to so many understudies of late, Ms McTeer gamely refused to give way. In the penultimate performance of the run, which I witnessed

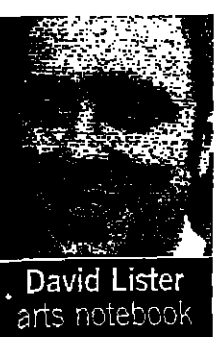
clutched in her palm. Somehow the hankie became part of the play, a visible symbol of Nora's growth as with every torturing self-examination she squeezed it, toyed with it or just plain blew her nose when no words could be found to express her husband's insensitivity. Thank goodness she wasn't playing Desdemona, when the invaluable prop would have had to be dropped. As it was, it became a character enforcing emblem that Ibsen himself would have applauded.

Cultural machismo as an arts funder clearly is no longer measured by the size of the benefactor's cheque book, but the size of his album collection. David Mellor as Heritage Secretary boasted of his 3,000 CDs. But this week Lord Gowrie, chairman of the Arts Council, managed to trump that. Addressing the Association of British Orchestras' conference in Manchester, he proved that he was several woofers ahead of Mellor's tweeter. Describing himself as "a great Poo-Bah of Hi-Fi", Lord Gowrie was able to reel off a CV which included

President of the Federation of British Audio and director of Verity Engineering, which makes Quad and Mission "gramophones", as he endearingly still calls them. Then he played his ace. "I own and regularly sample," he said, "about a thousand CDs and two thousand LPs, half of them jazz." Eat your heart out, Mellor. The subtext is plain. Anyone with a bit of doh can build up a CD collection. But 2,000 LPs. It's the dedication to vinyl that shows the true enthusiast. And this is no simple Blur and Beethoven earl. Note the telling phrase "half of them jazz". It is

such painstakingly crafted throwaway lines that make aesthetic reputations. Chris Evans's departure from Radio 1 might be seen as poetic justice in Scotland. When he broadcast a breakfast show from Inverness, he caused considerable consternation with his repeated calls on air for "tartan totty". While totty is slang down south for an eligible young woman, north of the border it retains its centuries' old meaning of young child. Sir Alan Ayckbourn is likely to have to make another

defence of his theatre and, indeed, theatre generally just a few weeks after the "lavvies or lavatories" row in Scarborough. The Stephen Joseph Theatre, of which Sir Alan is artistic director, faces a £70,000 cut from North Yorkshire council, which seems unfazed by the damning publicity Scarborough councillors received when they reportedly threatened to spend £50,000 on public conveniences rather than the theatre. That sounded like the plot of an Ayckbourn play. In fact, it was more Kafka, as I am assured by all parties in



David Lister arts notebook

last weekend, she ad libbed to apologise to Kristina for her "terrible cold", offered her a glass of water so she could take regular sips herself, and most notably went the entire three hours with a handkerchief

Scarborough that it was never a case of choosing between plays and lavatories. The facts were simply not allowed to get in the way of a good story. The North Yorkshire threat could be more worrying. Arts has to compete within the council's education budget. Defending theatre against libraries and teachers' pay will be more difficult than defending it against an increase in public conveniences. It is a great pity that North Yorkshire's placing of arts in the education budget is likely to force such a debate.

arts & books

Skeletons in the cupboard

Who needs a budget of millions to re-create Ray Harryhausen's special effects on stage, when you can have two blokes and a pipe? James Rampton reports on a tribute to the master of stop-frame

Thrill to dinosaurs walking the earth. Marvel at a platoon of sword-wielding skeletons. Wonder at a perambulating, 100ft bronze Titan and a six-armed sword-fighting statue. Tremble at a mighty earthquake. And gasp at a submarine plunging the ocean depths. Come with us on a *Fantastical Voyage* – at the Purcell Room for one week only.

So what does it take to conjure up all these mind-blowing effects on stage? A *Ben Hur*-sized army of extras, surely, supported by a team of special-effects wizards on a Cameron Mackintosh-proportioned budget? Er, no, actually it takes two blokes and a pipe. In *Fantastical Voyage*, Gavin Robertson and Andy Taylor re-enact highlights from the films of Ray Harryhausen – *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), *One Million Years BC* (1966), *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1973), and *Clash of the Titans* (1981) – employing nothing more than a bit of briar and a vivid imagination. (The pipe is crucial for portraying the Richard Hannay stiff-upper-lip types courageously battling the monsters.) Robertson has travelled this road before as the co-creator of the highly-successful stage-show, *Thunderbirds F.A.B.*, which ran for four seasons in London's West End during the early 1990s.

Old school friends, who know each other so well they finish each other's sentences, Robertson and Taylor are relaxing between rehearsals in a north London café. Taylor explains the absence of props: "You use the economy of the theatre. One of our producers wanted moving water to indicate the ocean. But that would just bring home the fact that we've got no set. Once you start trying to re-create scenes exactly, you might as well watch a film."

By the same token, the duo wear just one all-purpose costume throughout the show. "It's far easier that way," Taylor continues. "You're playing a gladiator one minute and a dinosaur the next, so what do you do? Strip off and oil yourself down to play Spartacus and then strap on a tail? No, you just come out holding yourself in an 'I'm well-oiled' sort of way... Then to re-create a dinosaur, you plod heavily, think to yourself, 'I've got a big fat arse' and swing it accordingly. People think, 'oh, there's a tail there.' They go along with the suspension of disbelief. We use the audience's imagination rather than years of studying with Jacques Le Coq."

This method does, of course, demand something of the audience; you can't just sit there, slack-jawed with popcorn in hand, waiting for a squadron of life-like, Spielberg-esque velociraptors to come scuttling towards you. "You have to establish the rules in the first 15 minutes and stick to them," Robertson contends. "It's about telling a story in a way that isn't reliant on giving you information verbally. Both our children love being read to. My two-year-old doesn't understand sentences, but he responds to stories. They're so different from videos because you have to use your imagination. People say to us after the show, 'I was surprised by how hard I had to work.' They have to fill in the details and say to themselves, 'it's a temple or a submarine'."

Drawing on the vernacular of the screen, this style travels well. "I've coined the phrase, 'living theatrical film,'" says Robertson. "It taps into that subconscious language we all know from TV and cinema. Editing is a way of telling a story. If you have a shot of a man, followed by a shot of a woman, followed by a shot of a wedding-bell ringing, you know they're going to get married."

The show leans heavily on the conventions of mime and has been viewed with disdain in certain quarters. "In Britain, we're obsessed with the text," Robertson says. "It's very hard to get movement-based work accepted." Because it utilises Harryhausen's work as source-material, *Fantastical Voyage* has also been dubbed unoriginal. "That annoys me," says Robertson. "When people questioned why



Ray Harryhausen and friend: the six-armed swordfighting Kali

Photo: Edward Sykes

Lindsay Kemp was doing Shakespeare, he said, 'I like to work in the company of great people.' Critics say it's throwaway, but we're taking the art of sitting around the campfire to a different place."

In the show and in the interview, Robertson and Taylor's deep love for all things Harryhausen shines through. Like the Daleks or Captain Scarlet, his creatures – Talos, say, or the six-armed, swordfighting statue, Kali – are part of every thirty-something's collective childhood. I, for one, remember cowering behind the sofa as Jason duelled with those infuriatingly unkillable skeletons.

Robertson and Taylor are adamant that their rigorously precise recreation of the distinctive, slightly jerky movement that characterises stop-motion animation does not take the mickey out of Harryhausen. "It's a fine line," Robertson concedes, "but people don't laugh because stop-frame animation is crap. They laugh because it's two men trying to re-create the movements. It's not a pisstake, it's an affectionate look at his work. The affection comes through in the feeling people have when they leave. We had the same response with *Thunderbirds* of something shared, remembered and appreciated. When we did *Fantastical Voyage* in Edinburgh, during the prologue the audience went 'a-ha'. There was a collective sigh of recognition."

Quick as a flash, Taylor jumps in. "No one is going to come away saying, 'Weren't Harryhausen's films awful?' Stop-frame animation is still an artform. Nick Park proves that." But what does the great man himself think of the project? "I was initially shocked because I thought I was going to be sent up," Harryhausen tells me. Having met Robertson and Taylor, he is now reassured of their bona fides; the show is, after all, an acknowledgement of the impact his models have had on a generation of cinema-goers.

Harryhausen was inspired to go into film-making when he saw his mentor Willis O'Brien's classic version of *King Kong* in 1933. "It was the wonderful way the film led you from the mundane world to the most outrageous fantasy ever put on screen," he recalls. "We all need to escape from our everyday duties."

He went on to develop the revolutionary technique of "dynamation" – "live action combined with animated models" – and to win an Oscar for his contribution. The process is highly labour-intensive; working at 24 frames a second, the celebrated fighting skeletons sequence from *Jason and the Argonauts*, for example, took five months to film. On screen, it lasted just five minutes.

Surrounded by a wondrous collection of models from his movies, Harryhausen sees a continuing use for the technique he pioneered. "I feel there's still an advantage in stop-motion because it gives the action a dream-like quality. Everyone knows that the Centaur doesn't exist, so what's the point of trying to pretend that it does? If you make fantasy too real, then it destroys itself."

Fantastical Voyage is a happy marriage. Harryhausen dwells in the same realm of the imagination as Robertson and Taylor. They are all mining our deep-felt desire to dream. "Everyone has a skeleton inside them," Harryhausen muses. "Some of my best friends are skeletons."

Fantastical Voyage is at the Purcell Room, South Bank, SE1 (0171-928 8800) as part of the London International Mime Festival from Wed 22 to Sun 26 Jan and at the Haymarket Theatre, Leicester (0116-253 9797) on Wed 13 and Thur 13 Feb as part of the Leicester Comedy Festival



You've won a Brit, a Booker and a Bafta. So why not a Bragg?

And here to present the *Independent Weekend Award* for Most All-Embracing Awards Shortlist Ever Ever is... **David Benedict**

From tunnel-vision to television. Judges presiding over such parochial affairs as the Whitbread, Turner, Brit, Booker and Bafta awards have been put in their places. Melvyn Bragg and his jolly crew aboard the good ship *South Bank Show* are touching up their tarnished reputation – too many suspicious co-productions with record companies and the like – and polishing their profile by launching their very own awards scheme.

Their "unique selling point" is that they cover the entire arts world with 11 categories from opera to comedy via pop, literature and TV drama (the last two, of course, being entirely disconnected). It's the scheduler's dream. Post-modernists and media-studies types will probably faint dead away from sheer pleasure as high- and low-cultural icons rub shoulders. Victoria Wood goes *Trainspotting*. Glynedebourne meets Oasis. And Rachel Whiteread can cast the entire cast.

At the 1983 Booker do, Selina Scott famously failed to recognise one of the judges, Angela Carter, asking her "Have you read any of the books?" What I want to know is: what have these judges read? The literature list is Norman Davies's historical analysis *Europe*, Seamus Heaney's collection *The Spirit Level* and Seamus Deane's first novel *Reading in the Dark*. Estimable choices, but scarcely startling. Rather than wade through an entire year



Something to Bragg about? Bryn Terfel, Seamus Heaney, Victoria Wood and Rachel Whiteread (from left)

of publishing (a terrifying prospect) I suspect a quick trawl through the Books of the Year and the Whitbread and Booker shortlists. If all the gongs end up on the same mantelpieces, what's the point?

The assessors' expenses alone for the Prudential Arts Awards would fund many an arts organisation, so unless Bragg and Co have come up with serious wads of cash to pay the live arts' judges to travel the country, how can they hope to be authoritative? They clearly managed an afternoon at Glynedebourne for *Theodora* but did Opera North get a look in? And can anyone explain the logic behind the clas-

sical music nominations: Ian Bostridge for his recording of *Die Schöne Müllerin*, Bryn Terfel for an Edinburgh recital and a recording of operatic arias, and Harrison Birtwistle for a concert performance of his 10-year-old *The Mask of Orpheus*? Bribery and corruption charges have been laid at the door of every hotly contested award with the possible exception of the Smarties Prize for Children's Books. In the fevered run-up to the Oscars, *Variety* virtually doubles in size as vested interests take full-colour double-page spreads to show their favoured product under the noses of the 1,000-odd voting members of

the academy. "For your consideration," they grovel, before listing every possible cast and crew member. Much to the star/director's embarrassment, they've even proposed dancin' man Kenneth Branagh for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Hamlet*, every word of which was by Shakespeare.

Even the Olivier awards are susceptible to jiggery-pokery. Cameron Mackintosh was so piqued when *Miss Saigon* lost out to *Return to the Forbidden Planet*, a Fifties movie staged with already existing songs, he persuaded the committee to reorganise the categories. He hasn't suffered since. Musicals have been sliced up

differently yet again. *Martin Guerre* is up for Best New Musical (before or after the rewrite?) but the completely re-conceived *By Jeeves* is up for Outstanding Musical Production. You figure it out.

Then there's the fine print. The best in the West (End) or so we're led to believe. Yet only those using Society of London Theatre contracts are eligible. Out go the Lyric Hammersmith and the Almeida, while the Royal Court faces the absurdity of main-stage shows being eligible but not those from Upstairs; hence *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* is up for Best Comedy but the smash-hit *East Is East* is not.

Most acting awards are down to casting. Certain roles have honours written in, particularly the "brave" ones, ie playing ugly, stupid or gay: John Mills in *Ryan's Daughter*, Dustin Hoffman in *Rain Man* or William Hurt in *Kiss of the Spider-Woman*. Or what about the guilt prizes? Liz Taylor won not for her indifferent performance in *Butterfield 8* but for being on her real-life deathbed.

Then again, where would we (and Ladbroke's) be without them? Screened ceremonies with the stars – who are they with, what are they wearing and why aren't they there? – offer the almost sensual pleasures of sofa-style *schadenfreude* that reach their giddy apogee with the Academy Awards. My American friend Matt's annual Oscar parties are the stuff of legend. Yes, I know they go out in the middle of the night over here but try telling him that.

The Oscars, you see, are the ones to which all others aspire. OK, they're a triumph of bad taste, but never mind the quality, feel the coverage. And despite all that sniffy "brings art down to the level of rank competitiveness", that's what they're about. I should know. A judge at this year's Verity Bargate Awards, I was also the inaugural winner of the Coombe-hurst Preparatory School Drama Cup for my unparalleled Widow Twankey. Eat your heart out, Diana Rigg.

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REVIEW

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A great knight at the opera

The pace of Opera North's new 'Falstaff' never lets up in a witty, frothy and visually arresting production. By Roderic Dunnett

Hot on the heels of its revivals of Phyllida Lloyd's pioneering *Gloriana* and Deborah Warner's searing *Wozzeck*, Matthew Warchus's new *Falstaff* is another landmark production for Opera North, and a sure-fire triumph.

Launched (as the others were) by the company's outgoing musical director Paul Daniel, with designs by Laura Hopkins (fresh from WNO's *The Rake's Progress*) and perceptively lit by Peter Mumford, the first night performance, as beautifully paced and shaded as it was full of zest and aplomb, put nary a foot wrong. The opening alone set the tone for the evening: Falstaff gradually revealed, back-of-stage behind gauze, scratching nefarious epistles to his twin would-be conquests, over which Daniel unleashes Verdi's 10-second opening flurries like a firecracker. Scene 1 never once lost pace from beginning to end.

Falstaff is not only late, great Verdi, but already in the 1890s anticipates musically the 20th century. You sense Puccini on the way, as surely as you hear retrospectively those whiffs of Berliozian woodwind, the bursts of Gabriellian brass that peppered Verdi's Requiem, or the sheer range of Shakespearean dramatic invention that the night-on-80-year-old composer fished out of the cupboard of his genius.

Arrigo Boito's meticulously well-judged adaptation of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, with shrewd extra-filching from Shakespeare's *Henry* plays, was a key to *Falstaff*'s success. A weak translation, like faulty pacing, could easily derail it, or shear it of much of its almost Mozartian finesse. Amanda Holden's rhythmically alert version, with just enough earthiness and licence (there were numerous laughs, none of them cheap), scores time and again: the way Verdi's anapaestic "dalle due alle tre" – the time of Falstaff's plotted assignation with Mistress Ford, and a source of exquisite comic wit and mimicry, in the score – is preserved in (the equally plausible) "from Eleven to Twelve" is a positive joy. Just occasionally a dark vowel or heavy accentuation gave pause to the singers; the men's enunciation was impeccable, the women and final chorus, less so.

But it was the pauses proper – where Warchus's direction (compare his *The Devil Is an Ass* for the RSC) and Daniel at the helm allowed the frivolities to be stayed and a genuine tension to build up in silence – that most did justice to Verdi's comic genius. Above all, it allowed Andrew Shore's Falstaff, an unusually



Grasping the mettle: Andrew Shore as Sir John Falstaff and Frances McCafferty as Mistress Quickly

Photo: Donald Cooper

mature performance of wonderful timing and finesse which towered over this production, to triumph. Shore seems equipped with both natural talent and as fine a memory for precision of tiny detail as Warchus himself, who rarely allows an untidy gesture to creep on-stage. Falstaff's age and indispositions were beautifully pitched and observed; the Malvolian revelation of the vain becaped dandy was as hilarious as Verdi's nostalgic aria recording Falstaff's faded boyhood memories was *Schmerz*-laden. The *piazzale*, or street scene outside the Garter Inn – arguably the finest of Hopkins' beautiful, indeed almost beatific, settings (as much Mantua as Windsor), with its frothing jug thrust through a hatch and variously sidling observers – was a visual classic.

There were other performances to savour. The brilliantly tricky nine-part male-female ensembles that terminate Act 1 were as well managed as the cluttered forest scene (ingeniously revealed by swung set) was incongruously clumsy. Robert Hayward imbued Ford with a striking vocal power and believable jealousy, thinning only near the end. Paul Wade and John Hall carried off Bardolph and Pistol like a pair of old pros. Of the women, chief honours to mezzo Frances McCafferty, a Mistress Quickly panting almost as much as the sweating Falstaff himself, (Shore's line about her being his "Mercury" was one of the few he threw away).

Belaboured by less sure diction, only the occasional aria from Rita Cullis and Yvonne

Howard as Falstaff's intended targets (their garish Van Eyck-hued attire – ubiquitous even in nocturnal snow-landscapes – seeming better suited to Chabrier's *L'Etoile*) managed to cut much ice. The love duets were charmingly carried off by Margaret Richardson and Paul Nilon – no great shakes as actors, but Nilon adding a marked pathos, likewise captured by Stephen Briggs's wittily clad, appealingly sung Dr Caius. The orchestra proved heroic, with oboe obbligato, off-stage brass and much of the upper string playing worth singling out.

Further performances: tonight, Mon, Wed, then 29 and 31 Jan at Leeds Grand Theatre (0113-245 9351), then on tour to Norwich, Sunderland, Nottingham and Manchester

At home in mother Russia

An elegant tale of playing Chekhov to the natives. By David Benedict

You're a leading RSC actress switching between high comedy in Molière's *The Learned Ladies* and Webster's blood-curdling Jacobean tragedy *The White Devil*. What do you do on your nights off? Nip down the road and perform your own one-woman show, of course.

Caroline Blakiston is not just juggling dates. Her portrayal of Charlotta Ivanova in *The Cherry Orchard* involved her juggling balls in the air. Dropping one during a performance would probably necessitate an ad-lib. Not so easy when the performances were in Russian. In 1990, Blakiston made history as the first British actor to perform Chekhov in Russia in Russian, and *Black Bread* and *Cucumber* is the story of her experience.

Lynn Redgrave recently regaled theatre-goers with her story of her life in *Shakespeare for My Therapist*, sorry, *Further*, an evening which split audiences into those who lapped up her soul-baring and those who thought they might die of toe-curling embarrassment. I'm afraid I was in the latter group. Translating artistic and emotional experience into watchable theatre is a trick all too seldom pulled off.

On the face of it, the pains and pleasures of performing Chekhov in the town where he was born, in the red, white and gold theatre where he spent his youth, looks like a masterclass in acting self-indulgence. Blakiston, however, lends an admirable astringency to both the telling and the tale.

There's a marvellously simple take-it-or-leave-it quality about her performance which draws you in. I was reminded of Hillary Clinton

going on to American TV to defend her husband over a charge of womanising. "It's a private matter," she declared. "If you don't like it, you don't have to vote for him." Shocking and strikingly successful. There's nothing shocking in Blakiston's elegant account, but her eye for detail and her skill in conjuring the mood and atmosphere of working in another climate and culture is wonderfully evocative.

She works as a miniaturist, holding the audience in the palm of her hand, wittily sketching in rehearsal clashes or her horror at being accompanied everywhere at all times, dovetailing thoughts and impressions of the play and the people she met with neat observations about the culture and politics. She was, after all, the first foreigner to step on that stage in over one hundred years in a country she describes as undergoing "a nervous breakdown". One of the actors tells her she comes from a country that values culture, whereas Russia is a nation full of people only interested in money and vodka. England, she retorts, "is full of scornful, insular arseholes with no interest in anything except money and scandal".

Just before her final performance, the actor playing Simeon Pishchik died. Her description of the funeral is infinitely touching. Amongst a company that had worked together for years she felt, she says, "completely at home". This isn't gush. At one point she told herself, "Don't let me go back to England and generalise the Russians." She needn't worry.

In rep at the Jermy Street Theatre, London SW1. Booking: 0171-287 2875

Beware of pandas running amok...

...as wild animals give young conductor a rough ride at LSO debut. By Annette Morreau

The naffly titled *BT Celebration Series* masks perhaps the most enlightened sponsorship scheme worldwide in orchestral music. Now in its third year, it's a collaborative venture with the Association of British Orchestras – the orchestras "talking shop" – whereby a new orchestral commission is not only granted to a grateful composer but receives an astonishingly large number of repeat performances from orchestras throughout the nation. It would appear to be the height of orchestral profligacy – with all those rehearsals to pay for – that a single orchestra is not chosen to perform the work up and down the land.

That would be to defeat an important principle: new work needs to feel "owned" and projected as such. So, between now and the end of June, no fewer than seven orchestras – the CBSO, Hallé, Ulster,

Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of St John's Smith Square, Royal Philharmonic and City of London Sinfonia – will be performing *The Creatures Indoors* in a place near you, all thanks to the profits of BT.

This year's commission, unlike the two in previous years (from James MacMillan and Richard Rodney Bennett), is a collaboration. The English poet Jo Shapcott and the American composer Stephen Montague were given instructions to write a piece attractive to both children and adults. Echoing the sentiments of Colette in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, Shapcott has written a series of completely enchanting poems that creepily emphasise the surreal dangers of "creatures indoors"; especially when they happen to be rattlesnakes, vultures, sharks or penguins. The 13 sections include "fly" interludes – for houseflies, blue-

bottles, blackflies, horseflies – that link the animal portraits. A largely non-singing narrator tells the tale.

The London Symphony Orchestra with Benjamin Luxon gave *The Creatures Indoors* lift-off on Thursday at the Barbican under the somewhat hapless hands of the Italian conductor, Tommaso Placidi, who was making his LSO debut as winner of the 1996 Donatella Flick Conducting Competition.

"Give me bamboo shoots. My panda's run amok. He's tearing up my bedroom: the family's panic-struck," seemed to make little sense to him, but no doubt this was fierce debut material. Luxon, in splendid avuncular form, was obliged to work hard to project Shapcott's words, not helped by a particularly rosy sound system. But the audience was warmly receptive to the invitation to hiss like a

rattlesnake and buzz like flies; hidden musical boxes added an enchanting effect to "Panda Power". Montague uses most of the "special effects" available to a large orchestra with big dollops of flexitones, tam-tam, tremolos and string harmonic glissandi. The music is straightforward and approachable but adds nothing to Bartok or HK Gruber in similar territory.

Placidi, likewise, added nothing to performances of Strauss's *Til Eulenspiegel* and Stravinsky's *Firebird* suite. But then, what new tricks are available to an inexperienced conductor with a world-class orchestra? His Puccinian approach to Stravinsky seemed ill-advised, his grand, failing gestures mucking up any rhythmic clarity. Keeping out of the way seemed the best approach in Mozart's Oboe Concerto, given a fresh, unshowy performance by the LSO's principal oboe, Roy Carter.



Hard to handle: Tommaso Placidi conducts

Photo: Keith Saunders

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

David Benedict

	THE OPERA	THE FILM	THE CLOWN
	Coppélia	The Preacher's Wife	Slava Polunin
overview	Ronald Hynd's English National Ballet production of the delicate 19th-century comedy with Kevin Richmond as Dr Coppélius and Monica Perego as the heroine, conducted by Stephen Lade.	Penny Marshall directs an all-black, gospel Yuletide remake of <i>The Bishop's Wife</i> with Denzel Washington in the Cary Grant role of an angel saving the marriage of Loretta Young, now Whitney Houston.	The Russian clown Slava Polunin and Brazilian sidekick Angela de Castro return after immense success in Edinburgh with a unique blend of sadness, theatricality, comedy and absurd humour.
critical view	'Louise Lavenne bemoaned a charming production "spoilt by half-hearted dancing". "Women struggled to maintain their balances while the men heavyfooted it," noted the <i>Times</i> . "Never reaches beyond the sugary," scowled the <i>Standard</i> . "Anyone with winter blues could hardly do better to pep up their spirits," beamed the <i>Telegraph</i> .	Ryan Gilbey recoiled at "endless ear-punishings by Whitney... Washington almost redeems the whole mess." "Bland is the word," mused the <i>Standard</i> . "Queasy," winced the <i>Times</i> . "Schmalzy," mumbled the <i>FT</i> . "Surprisingly tolerable," decided <i>Time Out</i> . "Less the Lord's servant, more Dirk Bogarde in <i>The Servant</i> ," pondered the <i>Spectator</i> .	Clare Bayley was thrilled. "Fills you with innocent amazement... a thousand people forget everything." "Stunning... terrifying, invigorating, overwhelming... brings us back to the lost Eden of childhood," breathed the <i>FT</i> . "Laughter and tears have never been harder to distinguish," cheered the <i>Independent on Sunday</i> . "I tried, I really tried," squirmed the <i>Telegraph</i> .
on view	Closes tonight, Royal Festival Hall, London SE1 (0171-960 4242).	Cert U, 124 mins, Odeon West End and on general release.	At the Peacock Theatre, London WC2 (0171-413 8800) to 30 Jan.
our view	A disappointing farewell to the Festival Hall from the ENB.	For extremely dedicated Denzel fans only.	Transcends every clown stereotype to deliver staggering <i>coups de théâtre</i> .

KEY

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January 29

February 1 1518121519122127

March 1

*Early start at 5.30pm

All other performances at 8.30pm

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Box Office 0171 632 8300

Der Rosenkavalier

Richard Strauss

a Bragg?

is... David Benedict



Enthusiasts now think that even Disneyland is worth preserving

REX FEATURES

Present tensions in a perfect past

Heritage is now a matter of life and death. Patrick Wright reports on the future of cultural conservation

The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History by David Lowenthal, Viking, £25

The tweed jacket can still be seen, symbolically draped around the bicycling figure of Dan Cruikshank, Georgian hero of BBC2's *One Foot in the Past*. But the transformations of the last 20 years are no less startling for that. "Heritage" was once a defensive impulse that cherished its objects against modernisation. Now it is a development strategy, even an engine of regeneration. Formerly the preserve of academics and hobbyists, it is now an industry aligned with tourism and described as a fit replacement for shipbuilding and mining. It may only have been to avoid having a French-sounding Ministry of Culture that we now have a National Heritage department, but the name confirms how far this theme has been marched from the cultural margins.

David Lowenthal has had an eye on these developments for some time now. When he started his survey he was a distinguished Professor of Geography. Now he is the free-ranging master of Heritage Studies, a hybrid discipline, which mostly seems to consist of a bit of history hedged in by practical modules on tourism, marketing and business planning. But Lowenthal has a wider vision. He can be seen at international conferences, still alert and on his feet when everyone else has glazed over – defeated by the endless mission statements that delegates at these events feel obliged to recite, and reduced to idly reckoning up their expenses.

Others may try to come to terms with the rise of heritage in their own society alone, but such confinement is not for Lowenthal. An American, he travels far and wide in search of heritage flora and fauna. He then disappears into his study in Harrow to embark on the arduous search for a unifying pattern in the uprooted and bizarre data that pours and spills across his pages. At low moments, Lowenthal must feel hopelessly overwhelmed. As examples pile up, every possible conclusion seems to be overtaken by its contrary. Repeatedly, the idea of "heritage" threatens to explode. If Lowenthal were a computer, he'd have signs flashing saying more megabytes required.

But he has managed to coax an extraordinary inventory of heritage pathology into a coherent, lucid argument. His case is that since 1980 or so, heritage has become a global phenomenon. It may remain predominantly western, but everywhere, the same factors provoke it – the pace of change, massive migration, centralisation, increased longevity. Lowenthal begins by differentiating heritage material from disciplined history. Historians like J H Plumb have argued that true historical knowledge is superior and should be used to dissolve heritage-like fantasies about the past believed by the untutored masses. Others, like Raphael Samuel, have argued the reverse: that historians should be prepared to learn from popular heritage enthusiasts.

Lowenthal is inclined to turn his back on all this. He declares that heritage is not the same as history and, moreover, that it shouldn't even try to be. The two serve quite different needs: "I acquit heritage of historian's charges not because heritage is guiltless of deforming history, but because its function is to do just that". Heritage is a testament of faith in the past, in which "credulous allegiance" counts over pursuit of objective truth. As catechism rather than fact, heritage invents memories and excludes inconvenient realities. It creates a "secret identity" ("us") and promotes false knowledge – the only kind, so Lowenthal asserts, that can serve as "a gauge of exclusion" for "them". This is murky stuff, and yet Lowenthal suggests it could hardly be any other way. "Forgetting what displeases us is not only normal but necessary" and "to sanitise a seamy past may aid understanding more than laying it bare".

History may still be written by the victors, but heritage seems to belong to the victims. Centralised conceptions of heritage were created as part of the nationalism of 19th century Europe, and a stately idea of heritage is still invoked as the stuff of "national consensus". But a different assertion of heritage has emerged – one in which "minority virtue" is lined up against mainstream ideas of progress. In this rootsy variation, heritage is the rallying cry of those who feel dis-

affected by the megapowers.

Such is its romantic appeal, that comfortable members of the majority culture are inclined to crave the "local loyalty and ethnic empathy" of victimhood. To be merely American, French, or English is to be deprived. Lowenthal quotes a Parisian teacher who, because she can't speak Gallo or Breton, laments that "I have no language and no culture". In America, he finds a Caucasian youth having a conversation with a loinclothed Indian – regretting the English colonists who wrecked the Indian economy, but then turning to blame the French, who "really did us in". "We have all become Indians", says Lowenthal drily – without expressing too much sympathy for the Cherokee sweat-lodge therapist who had to lower the temperature of her facility in Britain, despite "a lot of soul-searching about changing the tradition".

This conversion of aboriginal culture into heritage is a decidedly mixed blessing. It is inclined to freeze these cultures, conserving the "primitive" qualities that were previously viewed with contempt. Yet Lowenthal is most concerned about the nativist ideas that are sustained under the name of heritage. Over the same years that apartheid has been proscribed and social distinctions based on race weakened, Lowenthal detects an intensification of the view that heritage is innate. Nazism may have discredited the racial science of

eugenics, but in many expressions Heritage seems to be more and more biologically fixed, and therefore less amenable to social and cultural reform.

The determinism once associated with the blood may now be expressed in terms of genes, but the potentially toxic preoccupation with purity remains. Minority heritage may be closely connected with the idea of innate traits. But so is the Englishness of Enoch Powell, who remarked in 1995 that "racism is the basis of nationality", or of Lord Denning, who censured Leon Brittan (born and bred in Britain of Lithuanian parentage), as a "German Jew" who would apparently surrender British sovereignty. The pattern even extends into the vegetable domain. Lowenthal finds ecofascists preaching the creed of "native good, alien bad" and even English Heritage boasting of the native grass seeds with which it is "protecting ancient genetic lineage".

Lowenthal recognises conservation and questions of identity as legitimate global issues. A self-described "heritage activist", he recognises that the idea is inclined to fuel conflicts and rivalry. Sarajevo's library and the ancient bridge at Mostar were targeted as heritage sites, and the defence of monuments is also too often wrapped up in "bellicose xenophobia". If there is hope for the future, it lies partly in a rising sense of global heritage, albeit one born of European conquest. And also in the fact that, once the thoroughbred fan-

tasies of super patriotism are set aside, most people can claim multiple legacies.

This is a revealing and useful book, especially valuable for its international reach. And yet the rather helpless sense of quandary on which it closes may partly be a product of the global perspective that prevents Lowenthal from really digging in anywhere. Touch the ground for a little longer at any place where heritage is at issue, and other dimensions open up, connected not just with "history" but with local culture and politics. It is also likely that the vexed relationship between heritage and "true" historical knowledge will survive the curt dismissal at the end. Lowenthal is overcritical of the "heritage-mongers" (such as curators) who try to reconcile their marketing strategies with a commitment to truth, or to use history to cleanse their monuments of xenophobia. It is extreme to dismiss the very attempt as "hugely counterproductive", and only likely to bring the idea of science, history and also heritage into disrepute.

Having surveyed the morbid possibilities of heritage, Lowenthal may have discovered a sympathy with the idea of turning it into such a cliché that it will never stir deep passions again. But even that is unlikely. The current issue of *Harpers* has excerpts from a web site dedicated to overthrowing Disney president Paul Pressler. He is accused of turning the theme park's Penny Arcade into a stuffed animal shop, and generally destroying "Disneyland as we know it".

Journals of the plague years

Diarmaid MacCulloch on the epidemic that shocked a continent

The Great Pox: the French disease in Renaissance Europe by Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson and Roger French, Yale £25

Italy had a bad year in 1495. French armies invaded, sparking military and political miseries which over a century extinguished much of Italy's civic vitality. A terrifying disease also arrived. Apparently as fatal as plague, unlike the plague it played with its victims for months or years, destroying their looks, their flesh and sometimes their minds, producing sores and scabs which stank and made the sufferers loathsome.

The disease rapidly set off on its travels, reaching as far as Aberdeen by spring 1497, a quincentenary which the Granite City is unlikely to commemorate this year. Naturally the Italians called the new disease the French pox, a name which caught all Europe's imagination, much to French annoyance. France's attempt to re-label the pox as the Neapolitan disease was not an especially successful piece of spin-doctoring.

We now call this pox syphilis. The three co-authors of this book deliberately avoid talking about syphilis, which 20th-century doctors know, diagnose and have the means of curing. They do discuss the poem by a 16th-century doctor whose title gave syphilis its modern name, because the very fact of this poem is part of the book's

theme. What modern doctor would analyse an unknown disease by writing Latin verse about it addressed to the muse of astronomy? Yet no-one in the 16th century made fun of Girolamo Fracastoro when he did just that, and indeed what he said about the French Disease was marginally more sensible than most other contemporary medical opinion.

So do not look to this book for epidemiological analysis, or answers to the vexed question of where syphilis came from: ancient European *spirochete* with a sudden wanderlust, or novel import from America, the New World's revenge on the Old for Columbus's invasion? The book's title is over-comprehensive: apart from one brief German excursion, Italy is its focus.

We read about Renaissance scholars trying to use all their cultural resources to make sense of a baffling and terrifying disease. We are shown just how radically different from our own culture was an age which seriously debated whether the French pox could exist at all, since apparently it lacked a proper Latin or Greek name.

A killer plague which merely had an Italian nickname lacked respectability. If it could not be described by a word recognisable in

the ancient world, then there was no basis on which to start working out a treatment. For humanists besotted with classical wisdom, it took a leap of the imagination to suppose that reality could extend past the knowledge of a dead philosopher.

Meanwhile, the disease went on maiming, killing and terrifying. Action had to follow straight away, if Italy was not to become a chaos of stinking, panic-stricken and contagious beggars. The book changes gear in its centre, becoming a detailed examination of the new medical institutions set up in Italy to deal with the pox. The flagship among these purpose-built hospitals was an impressive foundation in Rome; this has left a rich archive, enabling us to count the very rags clothing the wretches who turned up for treatment.

The hospitals were called *Incurabili*, a happily inaccurate name, since the death rate in them was surprisingly low. One treatment which seems to have worked was to use a wood called *guaiacum*, both for drinking and for bathing skin problems. The wood had been discovered in America, so it had to be imported, and was reassuringly expensive. Charitable ladies held fund-raising drives ("World Pox Day") to pay for it, and for the work of the *Incurabili* generally. Still,

many doctors resented *guaiacum*. How inconsiderate and indecorous for an unprecedented disease to have an unprecedented cure!

The authors engagingly admit that to discuss Renaissance doctors discussing the French pox is to describe "nonsense". The least barmy medical advice, from one Pere Pintor, was to run away from an outbreak. Those poor humanist intellectuals really didn't have a clue about the pox – nor did anyone until 1909, when syphilis became the first major disease to be conquered by a targeted drug. We are left to make the comparison with Aids, which also leapt class and geographic barriers before anyone noticed.

Like Aids, the pox developed its own literature, because it became the guest of the powerful and the articulate – in those days that meant noblemen and clergymen. The pox also sparked blind prejudice. We are at our most self-revealing when we try to give catastrophe a tidy space in our world. We define who we are by defining the outsiders who brought us the catastrophe. Will the tabloid journalists who blamed Aids on Haitians, homosexuals or heroin addicts find sympathetic chroniclers in half a millennium's time?

Fat all attraction

Ruth Picardie has her cake and eats it

Eat Fat by Richard Klein, Picador, £15.99

Diet books are terribly passé these days. Instead of calorie counting, everyone is "eating for health": food combining, the anti-candida system, allergy eradication attempts. Last week, I met a German doctor who advised me to begin a "low acid" eating programme, avoiding rhubarb, wild cherries, gooseberries, yoghurt, sauerkraut, vinegar, vitamin C, margarine and meat. A few days later, a nutritionist urged me to give up wheat, oats, rye, barley, dairy products, sugar, salt, tea, coffee, chocolate and, of course, alcohol.

The new ideology – emphasising health, not weight loss – may be different from the old, but the advice is the same: contradictory, ever-changing and impossibly austere. A few hours after I met the nutritionist, I ate four slices of walnut cake.

The other growth area is the anti-diet book, a genre pioneered by Susie Orbach in the 1970s with *Fat Is A Feminist Issue*. *Eat Fat* by Richard Klein covers much of the same ground: the historical rarity of the emaciated ideal; the greed of the medical-health-beauty industry; the damage that dieting can do to the body; and the scary new generation of "anti-obesity" drugs.

What is new about this book is, in part, its tone. Klein, a professor

of French at Cornell University who once rode in a car with Roland Barthes, declares *Eat Fat* to be a "postmodern" diet book, lo on angry sexual politics, hi on fun. He aims to charm, not shock, the reader into giving up diets. "This book is designed to be thrown away," he writes. "Once you have consumed it, the text should vanish, and remain a delicious memory, like the faint recurrence of the feeling of well-being that accompanies the disappearance into your mouth of a chocolate truffle."

Thus Klein (who weighs 200lb) breaks off from expressing rage at the word obesity to write about his fat mom and fat sister: "They've both been dieting for decades...and have been getting fatter and fatter." He explores Fat Admiring sexual subcultures, from the endlessly frustrated Chubby Chasers ("They are looking for fat women [like glamour model Teighlor, who once weighed 719lb] with self-esteem, who love themselves fat") to the happier gay world of Flabio and Bulk Male. Later, he stops exploring the relationship between power and fat ("It's not money the rich are afraid to spend, but calories, which are worth more than money") to ask: "Why are Americans obese? Ask a Frenchman."

Klein's book isn't so much an anti-diet book but a pro-fat book, and he worships it with the sensuality of the best cookery writers. His love of fat is comprehensive, from the pleasure of plump olives to the sweet power of Jessye Norman, from 18th-century fat ("The creamy skin of those large dollops of pink women," begins his hymn of praise to a Boucher painting) to the ultra-modern. "She slips me an extra slice of toast," he writes of the waitress in his local diner, "heavily buttered. I really don't need it, but...I eat it all, because she loves me. Because with the wind howling and the snow sweeping through barely plowed streets, that fat is a kiss, between her and me."

Klein's really big idea is that diets make you fat: not physiologically, but philosophically. The more we diet, the fatter we are getting. Between 1980 and 1991, the proportion of overweight Americans rose from one in four to one in three; when Hillary Clinton installed a healthy, fish-grilling chef at the White House, the president gained weight. The lower in fat they are, the more crisps we eat. Ergo, says Klein, if we stop dieting, we'll get thinner. In which case, I'll have another slice of that cake.

A child's garden of curses

E Jane Dickson applauds a double vision of dark secrets

The Memory Game by Nicci French, Heinemann, £14.99

Jane Martello is a reliable sort. When the body of her sister-in-law, Natalie, is dug up in the garden of the family home, Jane is the one who serves up risotto and sympathy to the glamorous Martello clan. Natalie, a beautiful and brilliant 16-year old, disappeared in 1969, when she and Jane were best friends. When Jane marries Claud, Natalie's elder brother, she becomes enmeshed in Martello mythology. The family is her fulcrum and refuge.

So when, in the aftermath of Natalie's exhumation, Jane turns sleuth and directs her murder investigation to the very heart of the family, the reader is as shocked as the Martellos. From the first page Jane, sensible, sensitive and wary, has our absolute confidence. But do reliable sorts necessarily make reliable narrators? Can a sane and honest person bear false witness? This is the question at the heart of *The Memory Game*, a remarkable first novel by Nicci French.

A thoroughly contemporary thriller, it takes stock elements of the genre (unreliable narrator/revelation through analysis) and stretches them to their philosophical limits. The red herrings at every turn are evolved and involving stories in their own right, prompting seductive notions of parallel truths, and the ending is properly unguessable.

The sheer breadth of the material and the quality of finish would be impressive in any fictional debut, and the well-publicised fact that "Nicci French" is actually the husband-and-wife team Nicci Gerrard and Sean French is almost irrelevant. Almost, but not quite. Most couples cannot manage a Sainsbury's run à deux without recourse to *Relate*. The idea of sitting down and writing a novel with one's spouse is too intriguing to ignore and this reader, at least, was plagued with fantasies of the writers engaging in unseemly spats about whose turn it is to do the pagination or who has prior claim on the wave-washed shore analogy.

The authors have disdained the obvious cop-outs of a dual perspective or time-slip narrative and the writing in *The Memory Game* is commendably even, the shared style exact and unshowy. *Dramatis personae* are quirky without falling into caricature. Alan Martello, an Angry Young Man turned literary patriarch and father of the murdered girl, blubs and blusters through the narrative like King Lear played by Kingsley Amis. His confrontation with a feminist critic at the ICA is a set piece worthy of Amis at his early best, but his final breakdown is scary and believable. Separated from the emotionally constipated Claud Martello, Jane falls for Caspar, a creepy linguistic philosopher who has christened his daughter Fanny "to revive the name", but is also attracted to Alex, a pioneer of the controversial Recovered Memory Syndrome.

The title refers to Jane's attempt to retrieve the past she shared with Natalie and the Martellos in order to heal the trauma of the present, but memory proves a slippery medium. Natalie, enshrined in family lore as the picture of



Husband-and-wife team: Nicci Gerrard and Sean French managed to write a book together without having recourse to *Relate*

CHRIS DAVES

innocence cut down, emerges as an altogether more complicated character. The childhood remembered by Jane as a golden period seems quite different through adult eyes. The memory game brings her to the brink of insanity as specific concerns broaden into abstract obsession. Can memory ever be more

than an accretion of experience and emotion? Can there be such a thing as a shared history or does all history come down to a narrative which is more or less convincing? What is the purpose of a family if not to collude in a version of events that everyone can live with?

Gerrard and French are distinguished

journalists and their roots show in the thoroughness of the research. Descriptions have the authority and immediacy of reportage and the Jacobean toils of the plot rise from a hard-edged world of bicycle locks and council planning permission. If, in the last analysis, the ends of *The Memory Game* don't tie up neatly in the

manner of Nancy Drew, it is because real life is ragged and unresolved. "I think some things don't need to be explained" says Jane. "Sometimes damage should be left in sealed containers, like nuclear waste." In a society increasingly shaped by the politics of disclosure, it is a pertinent thought.

Transformed by sunlight on the way to St Ives

Louise Doughty sizes up a diffuse portrait of the artist

The Serpentine Cave by Jill Paton Walsh, Doubleday, £12.99

The difference between the plot of a novel and its subject matter is not always visible. In *Knowledge of Angels*, Jill Paton Walsh wove a seamless combination of the two and was deservedly shortlisted for the Booker. Her new book does not manage the mix quite so well. The themes it explores and the manner by which they are revealed are far enough apart for the stitching to show. It is a divergence that proves at once intriguing and frustrating.

The Serpentine Cave opens with the incapacitation of Stella, an elderly artist felled by a stroke. When she dies, she takes with her the identity of the lover who fathered her only child. Marian is

divorced with two grown-up children of her own. Toby works in the City but has been suspended on suspicion of insider dealing; Alice is a lovelorn viola player. Faced with a mystery, a dilapidated house and a mountain of debt, the troubled trio begin to excavate Stella's past.

What follows could have been a straightforward detective story but rapidly turns into something much more diffuse: an exploration of the nature of human desires. The book poses some vital questions. How do we decide what is important to us – and once we have decided, what happens to all the other bits of our lives which must take second place? Stella is initially remembered as

a selfish woman who neglected her child for the sake of second-rate art. Marian has duly rebelled and become a chemist who has always put her son and daughter first. Towards the end of the novel, one of them demands: "And didn't you ever think it might be the wrong place to put children?" Each character discovers their true priorities. That is the nature of their inheritance from Stella.

This process of discovery is intellectually interesting but doesn't pull on the heartstrings in the way such a story should. One senses an argument at work. Each of the characters represents a point of view, in a way that often interferes with how the reader might expect

them, naturalistically, to behave.

The weakness of the characterisation is particularly apparent in the oddly formal dialogue. This clumsiness occasionally extends to the rest of the prose: "When she recovered enough to explain herself, Toby and Alice received what fragments of this memory she told over for them with considerable interest."

In return, there are some wonderful moments of description and insight. A hospital room is transformed by sunlight which "eclipses...the neon strip lights on the ceiling, overwhelming their chilly accuracy with a rival vision, in which Marian's mother lay under a sheet of pale primrose, her face jaundiced". Later, the

setting moves to St Ives, where Marian discovers the history of the artists' colony of which her mother was a part. The tensions between the artists and the local fishing community are evoked with fine detail.

When Marian eventually traces her father he proves to be an odd, sad man. Although he makes only two brief appearances, his character is more convincing and disturbing than some of the larger ones that give the plot its engine. *The Serpentine Cave* is a bit like a much-loved but dilapidated motor car, providing moments of aesthetic pleasure which don't quite compensate for its inability to fulfill its primary function.

A week in books

Nothing much flourishes in January save for aconites and book prizes. Amid the literary blooms, it would be easy to miss the award for a first or second work of history sponsored by Longman and *History Today* magazine. This week, in the suitably august setting of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, it went to Cambridge historian Orlando Figes for his vast but vivid account of the Russian Revolution from 1891 to 1924. *A People's Tragedy* (Cape).

Figes' scholarly page-turner adds to the growing trend for Big History to mean Big Business. Not long before Christmas, Oxford issued Norman Davies' bulky history of Europe: a wide-screen epic encrusted by sparkling cameos and driven by the belief that the lands east of the Elbe merit more of the limelight. It has sold 33,000 copies here and 18,000 in the US – super-sonic speed for a £25 hardback.

Prior to Figes and Davies came other bestselling historians who merged narrative zest with analytic depth: Theodore Zeldin and Simon Schama; Felipe Fernandez-Armesto and Eric Hobsbawm. After decades of stratospheric High Theory on the one hand and number-crunching "cliometrics" on the other, the story returned to history – told not by quaint throwbacks but by the superstars.

For Gordon Marsden, who edits *History Today*, books such as Figes' overcome the "artificial dichotomy" between hard data and ripping yarns: "It's not a question of either/or. You must have good analysis with your narrative, and vice versa". Yet it can look as if today's historians have seized on the once-labour pleasures of the tale like binge drinkers after Prohibition. For Simon Schama, this means pushing factual narrative up to – and through – the gates of fiction.

These new-wave fables of the past match the "postmodern" drift in other arts; all are fuelled by our end-of-era taste for retrospective summings-up. Fernandez-Armesto actually called his bold global history of the past 1000 years *Millennium*, while Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* taught us that the "short 20th century" closed with the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991.

As the cool but compassionate tone of *A People's Tragedy* confirms, the ideological vacuum of this *fin-de-siècle* allows historians to look back more in sorrow than in anger. Until very recently, histories of the Revolution split along classic Cold War lines. On one side stood the defenders (E H Carr, say, or the Trotskyist Isaac Deutscher, for whom Stalin killed a great ideal). On the other, furious antagonists such as Robert Conquest dragged the horror of the Gulag into the light. In a post-Soviet perspective, both camps can sound remarkably alike.

Interestingly, Gordon Marsden suggests that the cargo of books now due about the British Empire and its sunset (as Hong Kong reverts to China and India marks its half-century of freedom) may follow the same pattern. The passion of both imperialists and liberators could fade as "younger historians look on things a bit more dispassionately". So have we reached a final Twilight of the Partisans? Not quite yet, perhaps. Also on the prize shortlist was Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*: a young scholar's searing, bitter argument that ordinary Germans (and not just hardcore Nazis) knew the worst and went along with it. Some wounds run so deep that not even a millennium will soothe them.

Boyd Tonkin

Make mine a superglue, brake fluid and insecticide

Harry Ritchie is shaken but not stirred by a lethal Russian cocktail

Moscow Stations by Venedikt Yerofeev, translated by Stephen Mulrine, Faber, £8.99

Bored of banana daquiris? Tired of tequila slammers? Why not try one of the exciting cocktails detailed in Venedikt Yerofeev's novel *Moscow Stations*. The Spirit of Geneva, for instance, takes 200 grammes Zhiguli beer and add 150 grammes spirit varnish and 50 grammes each of White Lilac toilet water and sock deodoriser. For the more adventurous drinker, Yerofeev recommends the

guaranteed brain-blaster known as Dog's Gblets, concocted from Zhiguli beer, Sadko shampoo, superglue, anti-dandruff solution, brake fluid and insecticide.

The recipes come from one of the many digressions in this short novel about the Russian narrator's alcohol-fuelled train journey from Moscow to see his son and lover in the town of Petrushki. At least, that's what is supposed to be happening, but the narrator's account is less than clear. No surprise given that, by the time he boards his train at eight in the morning, he is struggling to cope with a grievous hangover from a week-long bender, has just been turfed out of the station buffet after requesting a revitalising 800-gramme shot of breakfast sherry, and is preparing to tuck into his essential supplies for the two hour journey – two bottles of Kuban vodka, half a litre of Rossi-

iskaya and a bottle of fortified rosé.

Having overcome the melodramatic attack of nausea provoked by the first sips from his essential supplies, the narrator settles down to endure the ride. Though he is out of his box, there is no danger that his fellow passengers will scorn him, for they are all out of their boxes as well, including the ticket inspector who has devised an ingenious system of fines – passengers have to pay him a gramme of vodka for every ticketless kilometre. It's not a short trip and nobody seems to have a ticket.

The novel itself staggers along as the narrator gives us the benefit of his experience of life on the rocks. He provides a brief, crazed overview of an alcohol dependency in the lives of great writers, a daft survey of the world (Siberia is populated by "negroes", the streets of Paris are lined

by brothels and clap clinics), and another top tip, on how to avoid hangovers – drink what you had the night before until you have drunk the same amount and then drink another 250 grammes of the stuff.

Meanwhile, back at the storyline, things are getting dazed and confused. There is a drinks party of sorts wherein the narrator and other passengers resolve to tell each other stories, just like characters in a novel by Turgenev, but that quickly peters out. There's also an account of the narrator's attempt to engineer a revolution in Petrushki, but Norway refused to reply to his declaration of war and the only decrees passed by his committee concerned local pub opening hours (to be moved back to a more convenient 5am). But all too soon the narrator loses his tenuous grasp on reality, leaving him wrestling with those key existential ques-

tions familiar to anyone who has stumbled through the night, a congealed fish supper in one hand, a warm can of Tennents Extra in the other: Where am I? What am I doing here? How do I get home?

Tragically, this is an autobiographical novel, which explains why this is a posthumous translation. After a life spent drinking improbable amounts and kinds of alcohol, and getting the sack from a series of menial jobs (no mean feat in the former Soviet Union), Yerofeev died six years ago, just when *Moscow Stations* was beginning to emerge from its sorry plight as a samizdat work that lacked the kudos of political oppression. Yerofeev's translator, Stephen Mulrine, is to be congratulated for latching on to this novel and bringing it new life in an English version. The slang grates occasionally (faces are never faces but "coupons", "fizzogs" and

"ugly mugs"), but by and large he has done a good job.

What he can't do, however, is conceal the flaws of the original. Faber's bumf claims that *Moscow Stations* is "an absolute classic of Russian literature". Had I stopped reading the novel after the first 10 pages, I would have agreed, for the opening sequence describing the narrator's stumble to his train is a work of comic genius. But, appropriately enough, after the riotously funny start, the book wanders about, becomes befuddled and, especially during its more fantastic flights of fancy, gets irritating and boring. The kind of people who go to the ICA will clasp their hands in horror at this judgment, but for all his darkly farcical moments, Yerofeev has been easily surpassed in dark bedrugged comedy by Irvine Welsh.

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City of dreadful night

Elizabeth Young visits the London underground

Lights Out for the Territory by Iain Sinclair, Granta Books, £12.99

Iain Sinclair's London has slowly mutated into a literary territory as recognisable as "Greenland". Open this book at random, and there it is: "There is a decayed Unitarian chapel at 49, Ball's Pond Road...". All such mythical landscapes are the product of obsession: their territory is refracted and hallucinatory. In Sinclair's case, it is just a bit player in the Cockney clichés of the Kray brothers melodrama? Or have the twin hounds of Vallance Road finally been brought to heel as permanent exhibits in the major arcana of the Sinclair epic?

It was Iain Sinclair in his awesome 1993 essay "The Look" who divined the toppling of an empire from Tony Lambrianou's description of spotting Ron Kray without a tie. "This was a signal," wrote Sinclair, "a flag of surrender to the inevitable". The bell was tolling for that Sixties triad: "Villainy, business, image." If Sinclair can read all that into one open-necked shirt, imagine what he can do for the rest of London.

These nine prose pieces – in which Sinclair, like Huck Finn, "lights out" for his Territory – form a powerful distillation of all that is best, most potent and accessible in Sinclair's work. Here is a mind at the height of its powers, who can quote Homer or Carl Hiaasen with equal facility. He sees the living streets of

London as a crucible where Bill Sykes and Beckett's Murphy, Blake, Wren, the Angry Brigade and a sludge of politicians whirl forever, each illuminating the others' dreams.

Since the publication of his last novel, *Radon Daughters*, Sinclair has been dragged from small-press obscurity and hailed as one of the few major talents of his generation. His long, visionary apprenticeship in the shadows and his intellectual integrity mark him as more than just a standard-bearer for alternative writing and artistic dissidence.

Sinclair's view of London may be contagious, but it testifies to an idiosyncratic struggle with literary heritage and tradition. He excised sentimentality from the Beat sensibility, returned Allen Ginsberg's inspiration to its origins in Blake's London and created a parallel, mythopoetic universe of his own.

It is ironic that Sinclair's earlier work – prose poems such as "Bladud", "Suicide Bridge" and "Lud Heat", the *in utero* version of Peter Ackroyd's novel *Hawkinsmoor* – was considered too obscure for easy publication while his later, far more difficult novels met with widespread praise. The early work's combination of documentary reportage and autobiographical intersections allowed Sinclair to present his multi-faceted view of time and history. This "non-fiction" is such a mythical concoction in itself that the novels could only float further out into a trance state of linguistic hypnosis.

Sinclair's preoccupations remain consistent – an ur-London, his personal psychogeography, the Whitechapel murders of 1888; churches, cemeteries, graffiti, texts. His chance configurations allow an endless present, mingling fact and fiction, to bleed back through the city's ruins. Tales of his all-too-real co-conspirators (deranged book-dealers and maddened poets) seep into his fictions, while his own fictional creations stalk his non-fiction essays.

Among these essays, some – including the memorable account of Ronnie Kray's funeral, a guided tour of Rachel Whiteread's "House" and a dismemberment of P D James' Cadaver Club – were originally commissioned as shorter pieces. Others are constructed around Sinclair's lengthy walks with long-suffering photographer Marc Atkins. "Drift-



Whitechapel, 1870 (Gustave Dore): part of Iain Sinclair's personal psychogeography

MARY EVANS

ing purposefully," they noted and decoded a fusillade of fragments.

Blake, Dickens and T S Eliot hover purposefully in the hinterlands. Otherwise the view is a charged snog of trace memories, psychic voodoo, urban paranoia and filmic metaphor. Sinclair weaves a homespun, neo-occult web from a hoard including Dr John Dee, the Rosicrucians, Grail legends, the Invisible College, ley-lines, maps and conspiracies – an entire car-boot sale of alchemy and hermeticism. These forces, whether focused on pit-bull terriers or Jeffrey Archer's residence at Alembic House, spark a spidery trail of correspondences that thread through history.

There is nothing faddishly New Age about Sinclair. His mood is morbid, dark, ironic. The occult provides structures which – as with the Tarot in Eliot's "The Waste Land" – stretch like Jacob's ladder, "pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross". Sinclair aligns himself

with an angelic crew of London low-life chroniclers, including Alexander Baron, Bernard Kops, Patrick Hamilton and Arthur Machen. He provides notable pen-portraits of those he has known, such as the art guerrilla Stuart Home, the late Robin Cook (who wrote as Derek Raymond), and poet Aidan Dunn.

The cornerstones of Sinclair's gnomic vision appear to be, first, his self-definition as "someone congenitally incapable of accepting the notion of 'accident'". Second, he is "cursed with the obsession [with] books as icons, books as a form of race memory". Last, he believes that the city can divulge an encoded, subterranean text. Signs, however they appear, can be read.

So, just as Sinclair describes the pit-bull thrown from a balcony and granted a "brief, privileged view of Hackney", his readers are granted their own brief, privileged view of a festering London, its pathologies exposed by a fine intelligence.

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Tales from the Land of Zanj

William Dalrymple investigates the spice trade

Empires of the Monsoon by Richard Hall, HarperCollins, £20

In the autumn of 1487, two Portuguese spies set off on the caravan route from Alexandria across the deserts of the Wadi Natrun to Cairo, then one of the two richest cities of the Islamic world. Disguised as Arab merchants dealing in jars of Neapolitan honey, the two agents travelled to Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea. There they separated, one heading to the port of Zaila on the African mainland, the other taking advantage of the winds of the southwest monsoon to catch a dhow to the Malabar coast of India. The two spies would never see each other again, and neither would ever return home. One died in mysterious circumstances; the other, searching for the legendary empire of Prester John, broke through as far as Ethiopia, only to find himself forbidden ever to leave.

Their mission was, however, a notable success in one important respect. The senior spy, Pêro de Covilhão, was able to pass on to two Portuguese Jews the map he made of the Indian Ocean. This map got back to Lisbon and proved that if a Portuguese galleon were able to round the Cape, sail half way up the east coast of Africa, then head north east, nothing would stand in the way of a fair sailing to the riches of the spice coast of India.

As a direct result of de Covilhão's espionage, on 18 May 1498 Vasco da Gama succeeded in reaching the Malabar Coast at the end of what Richard Hall calls "the longest sea voyage in history". It was an epic achievement. The first Atlantic stretch of the journey alone involved being out of sight of land for three times as long as Columbus had been on his crossing to the New World. Economically, the pioneering of the trade route was an extraordinary breakthrough: what was bought in Calicut for a ducat could be sold in Lisbon for a hundred ducats.

As one worried Venetian realised, "if these voyages should continue, and they seem easy to accomplish, the King of Portugal can call himself the King of Money".

The Venetian was right to be worried. The creation of the Portuguese empire and re-routing of the spice trade resulted in the impoverishment of its ancient masters: the Middle Eastern caravan cities and, above all, the western power that formed the trade's final terminus – the Republic of Venice.

The Portuguese had not come merely to trade. They came to conquer, to attempt to destroy Islam and to con-

vert the peoples of the Indian Ocean to what they regarded as the one true faith. On his first voyage, Vasco da Gama let loose his guns on the African port-city of Mozambique and the Indian port of Calicut. On his second he indulged in an orgy of sadistic violence, bombarding towns, torturing prisoners, and massacring women and children.

The peoples of the Indian Ocean had no defence against European cannon, and no warships to match the Portuguese caravels. Even when the Ottoman Turks transported wood from the Balkans to the mouth of Red Sea and put together a special fleet to take on the newcomers, the Ottoman ships proved defenceless against Portuguese broadsides. In less than a decade the Portuguese had completely destroyed a free-trade network that had existed with very little violence for thousands of years.

Empires of the Monsoon is a panoramic study of the history of the Indian Ocean, and the destruction of its traditional trade by colonial Europe. The narrative ranges from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, from Northern Italy to Eastern China, and stretches from the emergence of Islam to the present day. Its major achievement is to weave into a coherent whole the histories of a kaleidoscope of civilisations and peoples.

Richard Hall is a journalist by training, not an academic, and his book does not aim at any particular profundity of analysis; its principal object is to interest and entertain. Rarely, however, has the dry dust of economic history been brought more vividly to life; and there can be very few studies of trade routes to touch it for narrative pace or for epic sweep.

Empires of the Monsoon reads like some medieval Book of Wonders, rich with exotic improbabilities. We learn of the African warriors of the Land of Zanj who collected the testicles of passing merchants; the solidified fluids of a sperm whale's stomach, which the Chinese valued as an aphrodisiac; of the 11,000 eunuchs of Abbasid Baghdad; and the Madagascan flightless bird which stood ten feet high and laid eggs more than a foot long.

It is all gripping stuff, dizzily ambitious in its scope and full of some of the oddest facts imaginable. As an icy January gives way to a grim, grey English February, this is just the book to curl up with and dream about the spice shores of Malabar.

The sad last days of Fortress Fidel

Douglas Kennedy goes native with our man in Havana

The Land of Miracles: a journey through modern Cuba by Stephen Smith, Little, Brown, £17.99

One of the more nervy moments in my travelling life took place at José Martí Airport in Havana. Having been commissioned by a magazine to write an essay on the Cuban capital, and after daily phone calls to the Cuban embassy in London, demanding to know when they might issue me with a journalist's visa, I finally decided to enter the country on a tourist card.

As it turned out, getting into Cuba as a *tourista* was a breeze. Leaving was another matter. On the day of my departure, my wife called to say that the embassy had finally issued my journalist's visa and was wondering about my whereabouts.

Grim visions danced through my head of arrest for illegal entry as I boarded the Cubana flight back to London – and, sure enough, when I handed over my papers to the immigration inspector at the airport, he tapped my particulars into his ancient Russian computer and then vanished with my passport. When he returned, I was certain he would be accompanied by the secret police. Instead, he was alone. "Is there a problem?", I asked. "No problem", he said. "Coffee break."

Like so many totalitarian nations, Cuba specialises in its own brand of bureaucratic farce – something that Stephen Smith discovered during his

foray into the Land of Fidel. But Smith (a journalist with Channel Four News) is no P J O'Rourke, turning a jaundiced eye on the absurdities of a failed Marxist-Leninist paradise.

He is the best sort of reporter: detached, ironic, yet well versed on the terrain he's exploring. But he also has an annoying tendency to turn himself into the centre-piece of his narrative, appearing as a charmingly befuddled Englishman abroad.

Thankfully, these self-indulgent interludes are brief. *The Land of Miracles* is a compelling portrait of a society on the verge of an ideological breakdown – yet which, in the

midst of a crippling economic embargo, still attempts to stagger through the day. More tellingly, it is a tale of an outsider trying to carve a life for himself in a deeply alien, curiously intoxicating culture.

Rather than peering down on "the natives" from the air-conditioned eyrie of a five-star hotel, Smith plunged into the grubby mainstream of Cuban life. Finding a room in an apartment building that once housed Fidel Castro, he experiences urban dwelling in a city whose infrastructure is breaking down and his narrative works best when detailing the day-to-day privations of Cuban existence. He's

especially adept at conveying the manic rhythms of Havana's decrepit streets, and is a sympathetic chronicler of Cuban life: educated women pushed into prostitution out of desperation; ageing tango dancers swirling across the floor of a rickety apartment.

Over all hangs the inherent melancholy of a society that knows it is a terminal case, but still tries to maintain its self-respect. Full marks to Smith for so cunningly conveying the sad last days of Fortress Fidel. In his next book, he should trust his powers of observation, shove his own persona deep into the backfield and let Cuba do the talking.

Paperbacks

By Christopher Hirst, Lucasta Miller and Boyd Tonkin

Cross Channel by Julian Barnes (Picador, £5.99) "Barnes est délicieux" simmers the shout-line from a Paris magazine about these 10 tales of Franco-Saxon attitudes. Well, Barnes's nicely-turned anecdotes of Brits in France melt in the mouth but seldom feed the soul. His penchant for bookish whimsy (a fatal attraction since *Flaubert's Parrot*) leads to such wan gags as the codger uncle mistaken for an *avant-garde* artist because he sells real beeswax polish: "*Cire réaliste*". At times, we're not far from Peter Mayle with a postgrad degree. On the other main, the tender portrait of post-war grief in "Evermore" escapes the rather twee formula to stand on its own as one of Barnes's very finest shorter works.

Christopher Wood by Richard Ingleby (Alison & Busby, £14.99) This intriguing biography covers 10 tempestuous years, between Wood's ambition at 19 to be "the greatest painter that has ever lived" and his presumed suicide in 1930 beneath an express train. A patchy talent, he is best known for a handful of late canvases, especially the surreal masterpiece "Zebra and Parachute". Wood's hectic coupling (Anthony Powell

remarked scathingly on his "convenient bisexuality") is almost a parody of the Jazz Age. His drastic exit might have been prompted by opium, blackmail or sad acknowledgement of his "genius in small things".

The Russian Century by Brian Moynahan (Pimlico, £10.00) In 250 superb pages, Moynahan records the incomparable drama of Russia over the past 100 years with verve and compulsive readability. The sweep of events is illuminated by telling details: there were 2 million nobles, including 2,000 princes, before the revolution; Lenin puzzling a posh wigmaker by demanding an elderly-looking grey wig for disguise; Stalin's secret police so numerous that they filled whole suburbs. After a century of upheaval, this great land, "freighted with the venal, the cynical, the confused and the plain crazy", has still to find peace.

Famous Last Words edited by Sean Costello and Tom Johnstone (Mercat, £9.99) This diverting tangle of 35 obits from *The Scotsman* ranges from "the poor but interesting dog" Greyfriars Bobby to Marie Stopes, sexologist and

"authority on coal". The sketches reflect their times as much as the person. Of Victoria's squiffy ghillie John Brown, we learn only that "his manner may have appeared abrupt if not brusque", while Nicholas Fairbairn is baldly described as "a victim of John Barleycorn". The overall effect is unexpectedly uplifting, as in the suggestion that Marxist poet Hugh MacDiarmid should be celebrated by a "two-minute pandemonium".

Verdi: A Biography by Mary Jane Phillips-Matz (Oxford £15.99) The American-born author has lavished infinite pains on a monumental life of a man who demanded to be "left in oblivion". Music-lovers should be grateful that Phillips-Matz put her qualms to one side. Verdi's genius is triumphantly celebrated, but the man behind the music proves to have feet of clay. This is literally so, since Verdi was a keen farmer, devoting so much time to his crops that his musical output was threatened. Industrious to the end (he wrote *Falstaff* at 79), Verdi is easier to admire than love, being irascible with associates and a cold domineering husband.



Portrait of Max Jacob, 1929, by Christopher Wood

Sugar and Other Stories by A S Byatt (Vintage, £6.99) First published in 1987, these stories deserve to be reissued. Unlike the rather unappealing fairytales she brought out a couple of years ago, this collection is concerned with women in real-life situations, though there's a hint of post-modern self-reference in the allusions to reading, writing and storytelling. In the best pieces a schoolgirl battles with a headmistress; a middle-aged writer unlocks her creative potential only to die; and Byatt anticipates her Booker-winning novel *Possession* with an exploration of fact, fiction and Victorian literature.

The Progress of Love by Alice Munro (Vintage, £6.99) Unlike A S Byatt, the Canadian writer, Alice Munro has built her reputation on short stories, and her mastery of the form is unmatched by anyone else. Mostly set in small town communities, her tales offer a yearning depth of emotion and an exquisite use of detail comparable with Chekhov. By some sleight of hand, she can condense a complex human relationship into a few pages or even sentences without compromising the relaxed, roomy feel of her style.



Audiobooks

[I] new to Patrick O'Brian, our most brilliant naval novelist not excepting C S Forester, avoid audio abridgements like the plague. Buy full-length versions, of which *Treason's Harbour* (Isis, 12hrs, £35.55) is the most recent. Patrick Tull is a shade breathy and his Spanish and Irish accents waver into pastiche, but he excels as bluff Cap'n Jack Aubrey and copes seamlessly with a varied and vigorous cast

before the mast. But O'Brian's 18th and most recent book is such a stopgap, dog-leg volume – one naval affair and only the promise of southern hemispheric adventure – that you will not miss much by only catching an abbreviated *The Yellow Admiral* (HarperCollins, 3hrs, £8.99), read with confident aplomb by Robert Hardy.

Christina Hardyment

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by Richard Hall



INDEPENDENT

ON SUNDAY

Tomorrow – a bigger and better *Independent on Sunday*



PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

Q Will your wife be able to go on working if you move to Downing Street?
A I see no reason why she shouldn't. Do you?

Q I wondered whether Prime Minister is one of the jobs where it is tricky for a wife to have a separate career.

A Hopefully we are a bit mature about these things. After all, no one said to Denis Thatcher that he should stop work.

Q What keeps you awake at night?

A The only thing that really makes me lie awake is that something might happen to the kids. That really distresses me. With the politics, I know what I want to do. I think I've got something to offer. I think I can change this country

**EXCLUSIVE: in tomorrow's new-look
Independent on Sunday,
Labour leader Tony Blair talks to
Rosie Boycott**

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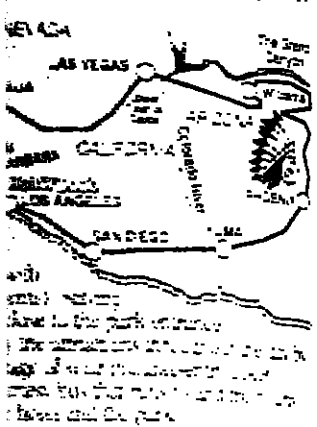
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Sweet dates in a desert city

Chris Caldicott finds age-old hospitality
in the souks of modern Oman

From the air, I had seen Oman many times: rugged mountains, miles of seductive coast, white towns linked by long, black roads across an infinity of sand, under an infinity of sky. I had even been down there, but only to change planes and spend weary hours in the transit lounge. Despite all the glossy chrome of the futuristic airport, the people drifting in and out were dressed in the traditional regalia of the Arabian desert and suggested a far more exotic and timeless land. I wanted to know what it was really like.

Set at the mouth of the Gulf, between Arabia, Iran and the Indian subcontinent, Oman has for centuries been a trading nation. Early Arab conquests in the first wave of Islamic expansionism created both markets and protection, and Omani traders and shipbuilders made fortunes.

By the 16th century this wealth had attracted the attention of resurgent European powers. In 1507 the Portuguese captured Oman and began a century-and-a-half of cruel occupation.

By the end of the 17th century, while the Portuguese, Dutch and British expanded their empires elsewhere and fought each other, Oman's power and wealth recovered. In the early 1800s its own empire incorporated the Somali coast of Africa, Zanzibar and parts of Persia and Baluchistan. Shows full of slaves, spices and frankincense generated great riches, until 1856 when jealous rivalry between the Sultan's two sons split the sultanate. One son took all the African possessions, the other stayed with Arabia. Then slavery was abolished. This brought a weakened Oman into direct confrontation with the British Navy, the inheritor of Portuguese sea power. Fuelled by a combination of moral righteousness, economic calculation and naval technology, Britannia ruled the waves. Oman went into decline.

Under a lineage of conservative and autocratic sultans, Oman, reduced to fishing and date cultivation, dwindled into obscurity until the middle of this century. Then oil was discovered and the country began the business of reunification.

Keen to secure access to the emerging oil fields, the British aided Sultan Said bin Taimar in subjugating the subversive Imam of Nizwa and his rebellious hill tribes. It was the fierce conservatism of this imam that made it too dangerous for Wilfred Thesiger to enter the area during his explorations of the Omani deserts. Despite rapidly expanding oil revenues, Said bin Taimar showed little enthusiasm for modernising Oman's semi-feudal society. In a bloodless palace coup in 1970 his more worldly son Qaboos was manipulated into power. Today he is the absolute ruler of a centrally controlled and clearly defined sultanate, although rebellion in the remote southern district

Oman essentials

Red Tape: The trickiest part of any trip to Oman is getting a visa, so you may decide either to apply for one before booking tickets or join an organised tour (in which case some of the work will be done for you).

If you are travelling independently:
1. Get an application form from the Visa Department, 167 Queen's Gate, London SW7 5HE (0171-589 2840), by personal application or by post (enclose a SAE).
2. Complete and return the form together with a letter from your employer, or a bank statement showing you have sufficient funds to sustain you in Oman. You will need to send your passport, plus a fee of £30.
3. Wait about a week.

Getting there: Direct flights are available from Heathrow to Muscat on British Airways and Gulf Air, but fares tend to be high (around £550 through discount agents). Fares are lower if you change planes. Flightbookers (0171-757 2444) has a fare on KLM of around £400 return from numerous UK airports via Amsterdam; Techno Travel (0171-482 0414) has a fare on Kuwait Airways via Kuwait of £439 including tax. Tours: Jasmin Tours (01628 531121) offers nine-day four-wheel-drive tours for £1072 per person. Cox and Kings



(0171-873 5000) has 11-day tours for £1875. In February 1998, ACE Study Tours (01223 835055) has a guided geographical adventure for £2095.

Further information: There is no tourist office in the UK, but you can try calling the information officer at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman on 0171-225 0001. Lonely Planet's *Arab Gulf States* (£12.99) is up-to-date and has a sensible 80-page chapter on Oman.

How to visit a small portion of Oman: Get a cheap flight to Dubai, then catch a local bus (fare £1.50) to the town of Hatta. Although there are no border posts, a longish stretch of the desert journey passes through northern Oman.

Rhiannon Batten



After the monotony of the desert road you reach Dhofar – another world

photograph: Chris Caldicott

of Dhofar was not finally crushed until the Eighties.

Despite such recent turmoil, within minutes of leaving the airport at Seeb, you feel Oman to be a very friendly and safe country. If there is a price to be paid for this security, then it is perhaps the obsessive personality cult of the ruler. Qaboos's image is everywhere, and the media report loyally and incessantly on his sayings and doings. But the distribution of wealth has been equitable (disidents may claim shades of another strongman, Lenin), and health care, education, housing and communications are highly developed and freely available.

When we arrived, the intrigue of the Arabian desert still seemed frustratingly far away. An FM rock station accompanied the Jeep ride into the capital; with the sea on one side and emerging skyscrapers on the other, it felt like California.

Yet not everything old has been destroyed in the rush to modernity, even in the city. The palaces of old Muscat, the elegant old merchants' houses around the dhow harbour, and the souk at Mutrah,

are all well preserved. The souk is genuinely exotic and full of exciting wares. However, it's all strangely clean and respectable, in fact all of urban Oman is. There is a law against driving a dirty car into the city. There are no bars, men cannot comfortably wear shorts, and women have to be very comprehensively dressed indeed.

The police are zealous but always polite: while out driving in the desert one night I was stopped by a patrol car with flashing lights and siren and requested to go back and pick up a cigarette butt someone had thrown out of the car window.

Yet romantic Arabia did not take long to find. We walked straight into it in the fishing villages along the Gulf of Oman between Muscat and Sur.

Sur itself still has traditional dhow building yards in its harbour. At a deserted beach near Twi there was an opportunity to enjoy some winter sunshine and swim in the clear sea among vibrant parrot fish, miniature sharks and giant rays.

As we turned inland, the sense of Arabia intensified. We crossed the dramatic

and almost deserted Eastern Hajar mountains and arrived at the spectacular Wahibah Sands. This great sand sea is made up of immense, linear dunes that stretch to the horizon and provide a comfortable bed under the most dazzling of night skies. The towns to the west in and around the Jebel Akhdar are dominated by 17th-century forts.

The Jebel mountains alternate between lush valleys of date palms and gardens around oasis springs, and fiercely rugged, arid hillsides dotted with villages. All of it is strikingly beautiful. The once uncontrollable tribesmen are now polite and hospitable to foreigners, often inviting visitors to their homes to drink coffee and eat dates. Most of the men are well armed and wear faded, patterned gowns, a sartorial world away from the neat, urban version, the *dishdash*. The women appear in full purdah.

Despite the overwhelmingly dry mountains, it can rain very hard and suddenly. Flash floods, like the one we were caught in, can come out of nowhere. It came like a thunderbolt from a blue sky, inundating the road in seconds, erupting through

the car floor, flooding the engine. The taxi was stranded, and, as long as the water didn't rise enough to sweep us away, all we could do was wait to be rescued. I couldn't have been shipwrecked with a nicer bunch of people. There was a turbaned Punjabi, a Christian from Kerala, two Baluchistanis, and an Egyptian driver. We spent two good-humoured, soggy and rather anxious hours unable to see anything except water where the fields of rocks had been. Our driver gallantly set off to find help, and returned with some rifle-sporting locals in a Japanese tractor. Inevitably the adventure ended with dates and coffee.

It is more than 600 miles from Muscat to the southern capital of Salalah. The road begins as an impressive multi-lane freeway speeding past the Jebel mountains, then a strip of bitumen stretches over the Empty Quarter. The monotony of the road is broken by futuristic oases of restaurants with air-conditioned marble interiors. Then you reach Dhofar – and another world.

Dhofar is the only part of the whole Arabian peninsula exposed to the Arabian Sea monsoon. The consequent sub-

tropical fertility creates a sudden contrast to the Empty Quarter: rolling hills of green pasture feed imported Friesian cows.

Frankincense trees are dotted around the valleys, their spiky ugliness in contrast to the exotic aroma of their gum, which provided so much wealth to Dhofar in centuries past. The resin is still on sale in the souk of Salalah.

Some crumbling old merchants' houses remain but most of the city is thoroughly modern – money has been poured into the region to ensure the inhabitants don't forget they are very much part of a united Oman governed from Muscat.

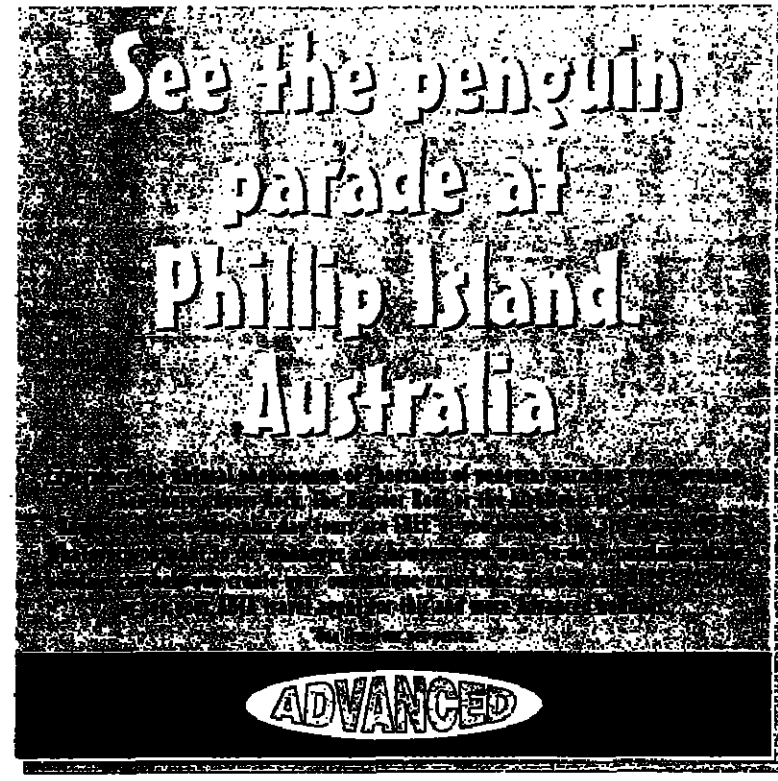
Beyond the city are miles and miles of undeveloped coastline, clean ocean and deserted beaches. Inland are ancient villages of rambling houses with carved wooden windows, surreal mosques, and an equally strange landscape made of limestone escarpments peppered with giant sink holes and caves, some of which are home to rather wild-looking Dhofari tribesmen. There is a feeling, here, of being in one of the outermost places on earth, certainly a long way from the transit lounge at Seeb Airport.



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something to declare

Bargain of the week

National Express (0990 808080) is becoming so generous with its definition of old people that its Advantage discount coachcard could soon meet the young person's coachcard coming the other way. Anyone 50 years or over can get the card, valid for 12 months, in exchange for £8 and a passport photograph.

For the next few weeks, armed with the card, you can travel anywhere on the National Express network for £9.99 return. You cannot travel on Fridays or Sundays, and must finish the trip by 13 February. The deal is not available on Scottish Citylink or Ulsterbus coaches, but can be used on Airlink services to Gatwick and Heathrow.

True or false

While Europe-bound motorists can benefit from Motorail services, cyclists will have to get on their bikes and pedal.

False: European Bike Express (01642 251440) runs weekly from May to September transporting cyclists and their machines to western France and the Mediterranean. The bus picks up pedallers anywhere from Middlesbrough to Dover. Fares vary according to distance: Nantes is £134 return, while Cavallino (near Venice) is £154. Members of the Cyclists' Touring Club get a £10 discount.



A likely story

"Always join the outside of a curved lift queue - it moves faster" - the new AITO Directory of Real Holidays

Readers setting off for the slopes this weekend may wish to try out this piece of advice from Stanford Sking, one of the holiday companies whose top tips appear in the Association of Independent Tour Operators' 1997 compendium - available

free by calling 0181-607 9080. If you are heading down rather up, then Superstar Holidays reveals that "the unique location of the Dead Sea, at the lowest point on earth, provides natural protection from sunburn." Tangney Tours also offers trips to the Holy Land, but its advice is less incisive: "Always be back at the coach on time during an inclusive coach tour."

Trouble spots

Bus crashes around the world

Egypt: at least 30 people died when a packed public transport bus veered off a bridge in Cairo on Tuesday and toppled on to a bank of the Nile River, sinking into the mud. Buses are usually overcrowded, with people standing in the aisles and hanging out of the open doors - *Reuters*

Bangladesh: on Thursday, a bus skidded off a highway north of Dhaka and fell into a muddy ditch, killing at least 17 people and injuring 33 - *AP*

Peru: Last Saturday, a bus careered off a mountain highway and plunged down a ravine, killing nine. Overloaded buses, on poor roads, are common in the Peruvian Andes - *Reuters*



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Oxford landing in the Seventies

Inhaling deeply, Linda Cookson goes back to her university city

I can't claim to have mingled much among the glitterati during my three years reading English at Oxford in the early Seventies. True, I did once rub shoulders with Martin Amis at the bar of the Eastgate Hotel. But that was only on account of the bar being rather overcrowded and our respective heights being rather similar. We didn't speak. And, to the best of my knowledge, he didn't sigh afterwards: "Who was that entrancing creature in the duffel coat, drinking Cherry B and cider?"

All in all, there were quite a lot of things I didn't do at Oxford. I didn't go to any Summer Balls - far too expensive, and my grant had always run out by the end of term anyway. The closest my then-boyfriend and I got to one of these fabled thrashes was when he suffered the ignominy of being turfed out of his college room so that the lead singer of Mungo Jerry could take up residence. Nor did I go to any of those mysterious parties that today's politicians all seem to have gone to, where nobody inhaled the marijuana. (The parties I went to were much more fun than that.)

Undistinguished social life apart, I also wasn't much of a front-runner in the cultural stakes. It was, after all, the Seventies and no self-respecting Pink Fairies fan would have allowed himself to be seen wearing a college scarf, let alone doing any work. Hence, I didn't set foot in a single museum in the city during my undergraduate days - not even to marvel at the Alfred Jewel in the Ashmolean or to gaze at the shrunken heads in the Pitt Rivers Museum of Ethnology. These delights had to lie in wait for me until after I'd graduated - along with other treasures as diverse as Guy Fawkes's lantern, Oliver Cromwell's death mask and (in the Pitt Rivers) a ballerina made from flies.

Yet I wasn't a total heathen during my time in Oxford. I honoured a solemn oath not to torch the Bodleian



Classic Oxford: Radcliffe Camera

PHOTO: TOM PILSTON

library, for example - a ritual that formed one of the weirder highlights of my first week. It came hard on the heels of Matriculation, an induction for new students carried out - in Latin - within the pillared grandeur of Wren's Sheldonian Theatre. For that ceremony I had to kit myself out in "subfusc", the university's black-and-white uniform for formal occasions. In the photos I look like Fifi the maid.

Other memorable moments from Week One include tumbling down the stairs after my first tutorial, drunk on the novel taste of sherry - and, indeed, the first sight of my tutor, a marvelously grand lady of literature, who

smoked menthol cigarettes from a holder while a Siamese cat twined itself around her legs. More creditably, I remember gasping with astonishment when I first went into the underground Norrington Room at Blackwells, the city's most famous book-shop. Built out under Trinity College in 1966, the extension houses more than three miles of shelving. The bookshops in Broad Street remain very much the same now, although a large Dillons has appeared on the corner with Cornmarket. Other habitual ports of call for students have changed a bit. In the café world, for instance, the old Kardomah

has vanished from Cornmarket, and the Wimpy - which used to have pictures of college dining halls on its walls in deference to the location - has turned into a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet. Happily, though, the greasy spoon on St Giles lives on - and so does Browns in the Covered Market. Here, tea comes thick as treacle and you can watch the shoppers of the world go by carrying everything from unpucked pheasants to jars of fancy pasta.

The other Browns - Oxford's first brasserie, on Woodstock Road - is also still very much on the go. It's larger now than when it opened in

1976, but still distinctive in its ambience of bustle and chat among pianos, plants and overhead fans. I went back to Oxford the other week and had lunch there. My old favourite, peasant's pot, had slipped from the menu. But the hot chicken salad was terrific. New places include Freud's on Walton Street, housed in a former church, and Café Coco on the Cowley Road - the latter being "where it's at", according to the newsletter regularly sent to me by the University in the vain hope that I might one day endow a building.

The pubs, unsurprisingly, are still much the same, apart from the increase in Space Invader-type machines and a riot of trendy Italian breads on the sandwich menus. The old-fashioned pubs are still the favourites - snug and cosy (if inevitably crowded and noisy) with their open fires and wood-paneling. There's the Eagle and Child on St Giles, where Tolkien, CS Lewis and others gathered daily to share their latest writing. There's the Turf, in Bath Place off Holywell Street, with its famous beer gardens and barbecues, and the Bear on Alfred Street, which boasts a collection of 7,000 ties. Nearest to the bookshops on Broad Street are the King's Arms (on the corner of Holywell Street) and - on Broad Street itself - the White Horse, where Inspector Morse is usually filmed taking his midday pint.

My trip back to Oxford was before term started. The city was as beautiful as ever, with flakes of snow swirling round golden buildings. But I missed seeing the throng of students. There'll be many more women among them, I hope. (When I began at Oxford, only five undergraduate colleges admitted women. Now all of them do.) Some students will belong to colleges that didn't even exist in my day, such as Kellogg College (no prizes for guessing the nickname). All of these changes, I'm sure, are positive. But I also know that this generation of students - even at Oxford - will be labouring now under the sort of student poverty that didn't exist as we Pink Fairies fans wailed down the Cherwell on our punts. Higher education is now seriously underfunded. I was lucky and privileged to go to Oxford. I was even more lucky and privileged to be there during the Seventies.

Linda Cookson's latest book, a study of the poet Brian Patten, is published in February (Northcote House, £7.99).

Students: win a trip to Paradise

Enter our travel writing competition, and you could phone home from the Queensland coast

Can you write the ultimate survival manual for Manchester, or tell fellow students how to get the most out of Strathclyde? If so, you could win a trip to an even more exotic university town. BT Chargecard and The Independent have joined forces with Rough Guides and Campus Travel to concoct the best-ever student travel-writing competition.

To enter, you need not venture beyond your own city limits. The task is to write a Rough Guide-style account - in no more than 500 words - of the town or city where you study.

Send your guide to the address below, and you could win one of five big prizes:

1. Travel by Eurostar to Paris, and cross to the Sorbonne on the Left Bank (plus £750 spending money).
2. Fly to Bologna, venue for one of the most ancient universities in Europe (plus £750 spending money).
3. Take a trip to Harvard, just across the river from the New England city of Boston (plus £1,000 spending money).
4. Wander over to the West Coast, and bowl up at Berkeley, on the San Francisco bay (plus £1,000 spending money).

1. Surfer's Paradise may sound like an implausible place to graduate, but study's up at Bond University on the Queensland coast of Australia (plus £1,500 spending money).

For guidance on styling your story, BT has set up a special helpline (0345 345004) which you can call - at local rates - to hear top tips from Rough Guide writers. If you are calling from a payphone, you will find it cheaper to make the call with a BT Chargecard than by using cash. Call free on 0800 345144 to sign up.

Send your account, which needs to be accurate, pithy and observant, to: Write Your Way Around The World, Rough Guides, 1 Mercer Street, London WC2H 9QT, to arrive by 1 March. The results will be announced just before Easter. Ten runners-up will each receive the Rough Guide to Britain. The winners may be commissioned to work on an assignment for Rough Guides, payable at the usual rates.

Rules

1. Only students currently registered at UK universities and colleges may apply.

2. Neither employees of Newspaper Publishing, British Telecommunications plc, Campus Travel or Rough Guides, nor their relatives, may enter.
3. Winners will be notified by post by 21 March.
4. Travel arrangements will be made by Campus Travel, and will aim to match the winner's preferred dates of travel. Please note, however, that certain dates may not be available due to heavy booking.
5. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.
6. Usual Newspaper Publishing plc rules apply.

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Palladio's perfect building

Jonathan Glancey admires the Villa Rotunda

Andrea Palladio (1508-80) is the renaissance genius who shaped not only

Vicenza but created some of the finest country houses of all time. These can be found along the Brenta Canal and the Po Valley between Venice and Vicenza. One of the finest is Villa Capra (better known as the Rotonda and built in 1550-1551 for Cardinal Capra) an exquisite villa famous for its four identical entrance

facades - more a summer retreat than a workaday home - which is reached via an easy and delightful walk from the centre of Vicenza. If it looks familiar to British eyes, this is because the house was reinterpreted both at Chiswick by Lord Burlington and at Mereworth in Kent in the 18th century. It also played a starring role in Joseph Losey's luscious film version of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Palladio was the hero of what we call the Palladian movement, a British architectural fashion nurtured by Lord Burlington which ousted the theatrical Baroque of Wren, Van Brugh and Hawksmoor, replacing it with a rigorous and chaste style that stayed in fashion for around 50 years and gave Britain the country houses we know and cherish today.

Thomas Jefferson, president and author of the American Declaration of Independence, took Palladio's style with him to Virginia where he tended the flowering of a transatlantic Italian renaissance.

Palladio has cast a long and perfectly proportioned shadow across the face of the western world. Arguably he is the most influential of all architects and the charisma of his perfect buildings continues to fascinate us.

Looking at the Rotonda it is easy to see why. The house, its proportions rooted firmly in the golden mean and a related series of sophisticated mathematical ratios, is as complex and as harmonious as a Bach fugue. It is also extremely beautiful.

enhances the landscape and is handsomely crafted. And it is a delightful architectural puzzle - is it a square house built around a dome, or a circular house with square walls?

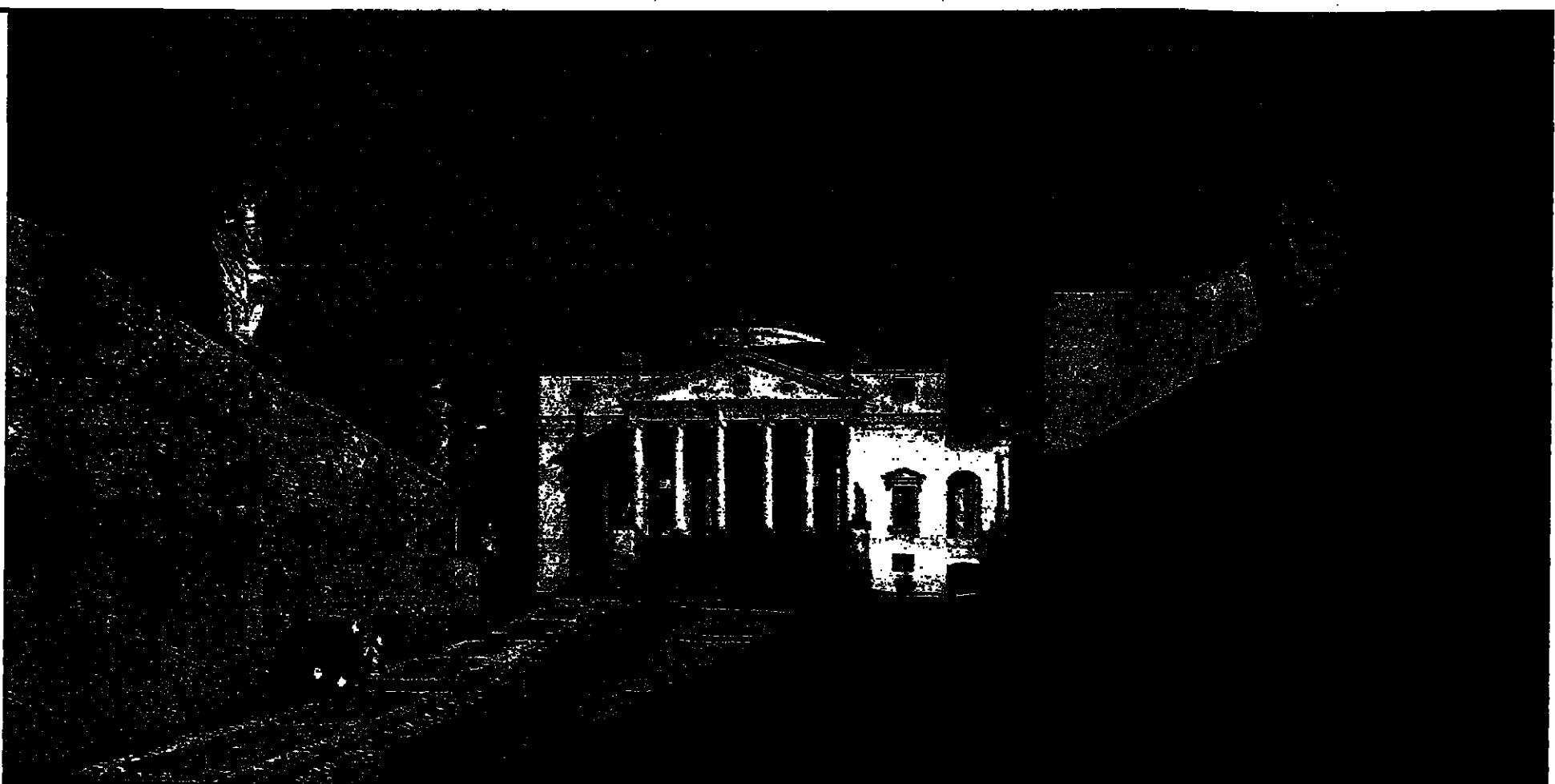
Palladio was popular with clients - the new Venetian rich who wanted model farms to escape to after long seasons making large amounts of money from banking and international trade in Venice - and with workmen too. Clients loved him because he endowed them with immaculate taste and sophistication; builders respected him as a fellow craftsman who had worked his way up the hard way.

Born in Padua, Andrea di Pietro della Gondola was apprenticed as a stonemason. The name we know him by is a nickname derived from Pallas, goddess of wisdom and was bestowed on the brilliant young mason by his patron and mentor, Gian Giorgio Trissini, who introduced Palladio to the worlds of antiquity, classicism and ancient Rome. Trissini took his protégé to Rome in 1545 where they stayed until 1547. Palladio brought Rome back in his satchel and reinterpreted its finest architecture for the Venetian bourgeoisie. He did not disappoint them.

Out in the country around Vicenza it is hard to know where to start a tour of Palladio's peerless farmhouses. There are a large number of them and they are all magnificent. Perhaps the best starting point is the Villa Saraceno, now owned and rented out by the Landmark Trust (01628 825925). Book well ahead and live in the style of Palladio.

Then compare it to Villa Poggiano, Villa Zeno, Villa Barberi, Villa Mocenigo. Each is a brilliant marriage between ancient Rome and the (modern) world. Palladio and his clients operated in.

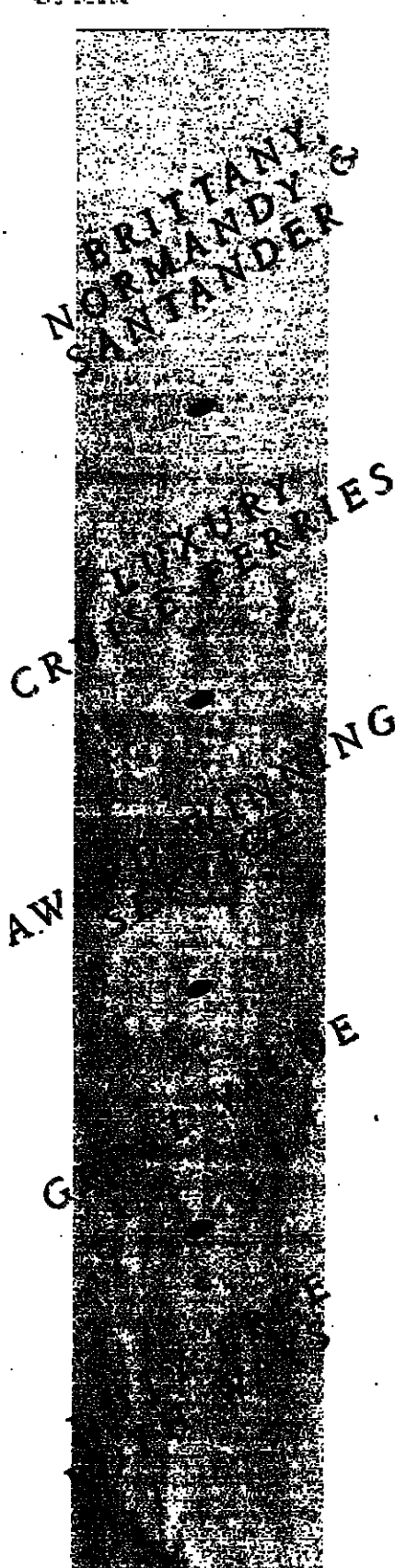
A tour of these houses will take you through delightful countryside - not grand, but happily settled - and make you hungry for more. Travelling may tire you, but Palladio never will.



A delightful architectural puzzle: the Villa Capra, better known as the Rotonda

PHOTO: ARCAID

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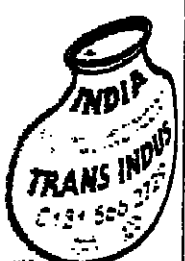
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Duff Hart-Davis

It is the close detail of everyday life that is of greatest fascination in the history of an area

It is now 11 years since we moved into our farmhouse, but I still know lamentably little about its history. A visiting dower once sat in the kitchen over a cup of coffee and, after consulting his pendulum, asked whether the building had gone up in 1681. I replied that it was entirely possible, but I had no way of verifying it.

Over the years scraps of information have come to light. For example, in 1936 an entire second storey was removed, because the weight of the stone was causing the walls to bulge. To this day the house is held together with tie-rods, with crossed bars and nuts at either end.

We also know that there were more buildings in and around the farmyard, and that two cottages once stood in the corner of the wood just above us. But when did they disappear? Inside the house, why is the wall between sitting room and parlour 6ft thick? And why are some doorways only 5ft 6in high? Were people really that small in those days?

Many such questions came to mind when I hit on a copy of *Northcourt Avenue*, a 70-page history of a pleasant residential road in Reading's southern suburbs. The pamphlet is obviously of greatest interest to residents, but it is so well researched and produced that it may goad other householders into discovering more about their homes.

The author is Penny Kemp, a history teacher who came to the Avenue only in 1988, and so felt "rather presumptuous" in tackling the booklet. She put a tremendous amount of unpaid work into the project, but, like everyone who became involved, she felt it was beneficial to the community, as it helped people to get to know their neighbours better. Her on-site contributors included distinguished artists who gave their services free, providing attractive line drawings not only of the houses, but also of the birds and animals in the gardens.

It is sobering to find that the Avenue - which is now engulfed in the sprawl of Reading - did not exist until early this

century. The ground its houses now cover was then farmland belonging to the Palmer family (in partnership with whom Thomas Huntley famously made biscuits). In 1904 builders bought the land and speculation ran riot. The Twenties brought a particular rush of new dwellings, many with splendid names: Stepside, El Ferden, Gorphwysfa, Locarno.

Today Northcourt Avenue is a long way from open country. You have to drive through two miles of solid houses, and then cross the M4, before you come to any fields.

The street gains interest from its proximity to Reading University and Leighton Park School. And Peter May, captain of the England cricket team, was brought up at No 95; Margaret Thatcher once went to a christening party in the garden of No 42.

Yet it is the close details of everyday existence, the fluctuating fortunes of the families who built or bought the houses, that provide the greatest fascination. The Avenue contains only 120 households, but more than 300 copies of the booklet have already been sold. A similar record of the nearby village of Sonning has gone through three editions. Local estate agents have been among the keenest buyers, reckoning that a bit of history increases the value of any property.

If so much can be found out about a street that has existed for less than a century, why do I know so little about my own house, which is at least three times as old? Perhaps I have not dug deeply enough in the local record office. Maybe I should question more old-timers in the village. Mrs Kemp and her helpers have inspired me to have a go.

Northcourt Avenue: its History and People (£9 inc p&p), available from Penny Kemp, 66 Northcourt Avenue, Reading RG2 7HQ

The right to ramble on

David Foster assesses the impact of new footpaths

Freedom to roam. Whenever landowners and rambles talk about access, those three words are sure to make the feathers fly. For most of this century rambles have been pressing for a statutory right to roam over open, uncultivated countryside in England and Wales; and landowners, pointing to the practical difficulties, have consistently opposed their proposals.

The Country Landowners Association (CLA), whose members own 60 per cent of the rural land in England and Wales, believes that the time has come for a less adversarial approach. To them, countryside recreation means more than just walking; they recently asked more than 60 interested organisations (including canoeists, anglers, cyclists and all-wheel-drive enthusiasts) for input into their Access 2000 policy.

The Ramblers' Association's Director, Alan Mattingly, while welcoming the proposals for more space to roam, sees "the primary aim of Access 2000 as an attempt by landowners to head off any moves... to legislate for freedom to walk over mountain and moorland".

Still, actions speak louder than words, and some landowners have already created "permissive paths" on their estates. These allow free public access, usually for a defined period of up to 10 years, while giving landowners far more freedom to manage their estates profitably.

Even the best new paths aren't much use if nobody knows where they are. The Ordnance Survey is to show more access information on its Landranger maps. The larger-scale Pathfinder series is also due for a major revamp, and some long-term permissive paths will be added.

The estate owner

Barn owls breed on Robin Combe's estate at Bayfield, just a couple of miles inland from Blakeney on the North Norfolk coast. There are others in the river and butterflies in the park.

A different owner might try to keep people out, but Mr Combe, a CLA member, says: "Anybody who doesn't open as much of their estate as they possibly can is making a huge mistake. Most rambles have the interests of the countryside at heart; they're the people we have to enlist on our side to help protect it."

These aren't just empty words. He has so far opened up free access to four miles of permissive footpaths at Bayfield, and has 10 miles of riding track paid for by annual subscription.

But his work has implications beyond the estate's boundaries, for North Norfolk's internationally important scenery and wildlife are under threat from the sheer number of visitors. The Norfolk Coast Project, a joint Countryside Commission and local authority initiative, aims to encourage holidaymakers to sample some of the area's less vulnerable



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROB STRATTON

habitats. Project Officer Graeme Hayes sees Bayfield's initiative as a positive step. "Visitors' cars are a real problem on the coast," he says. "Getting people to explore inland areas on foot is an ideal solution."

It's a concept that seems to work well for everyone. "In the three years we've had these access paths," says Mr Combe, "we've had nothing but goodwill, pleasure and a great deal of satisfaction for a lot of people. I'm thrilled we've done it."

The farmer

In 1468 an English army under the command of the Earl of Pembroke was marching to lay siege to Hartley Castle. Near journey's end, the sol-

diers swept down the Nantool valley, crossing the land now grazed by John Wynne's sheep.

Other feet now tramp these hills, and Mr Wynne is delighted to see them. "They're all nice people," he says, "but what they don't realise is that when you come into this sort of a place it is potentially hazardous". Time and again he gets called out to help rescue lost or injured walkers who have strayed off the footpaths and come to grief on the precipitous mountain slopes above his farm at Glyn Ardd, near Llanbedr.

The solution, thinks John, is for the National Park Authority to waymark the more popular walks, and to publish maps of the routes, graded for

difficulty. Yet there is already a plethora of guidebooks and leaflets.

The authority has recently completed the first-ever survey of all Snowdonia's footpaths and bridleways. Less than a third of them meet all the legal requirements for public use, but essential remedial work is under way. However, high-intensity waymarking might engender a false sense of security. National Park wardens would prefer to see walkers navigating safely with map and compass.

But, with no clear consensus on how inexperienced walkers can best enjoy the mountains, many landowners are worried about their legal liability when accidents do happen.

How to make a molehill out of a mountain

Gill Tunstall navigates her way around the Welsh hills

According to Ruskin, there's no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather. How he would have described an Indian summer followed immediately by storm-force gales and rain as thick as Dralton curtains is anybody's guess. But that's British weather for you. Fickle. One minute you're strolling along a mountain path like Heidi; the next you're in the eye of a storm, lost, with a map that rapidly turns to paper mâché.

Yet it needs to be that way, as I discovered by joining an introductory mountaineering skills course at Plas Y Brenin, the National Mountaineering Centre at Capel Curig in north Wales. The five-day course covers almost everything you need to know to have a safe day out on the hills.

And that's what Jonathan, a tree surgeon from Essex, Annie, a globe-trotting marketing executive, Paul, an electronics engineer, and Caroline, a pensions adviser, wanted to learn. All had walked with groups, but wanted the confidence to strike out on their own.

The first morning dealt, appropriately, with weather. As gales battered the building, we huddled round a Met Office map, with a swirl of tightly-packed isobars like a migraine before our eyes. Like Ruskin, our instructor, Carl Harbel, is a man who looks on the bright side. The weather may have looked bad, but it wouldn't put a dampener on the day. So, after juggling map and compass in the classroom, we headed into the great outdoors for the real thing.

"Navigation is absolutely the most vital thing for a good day out on the hills," said Carl. With that in mind we spent the afternoon splashing round open moorland nearby, navigating from stream bend to wall junction, footbridge to woodland, and learning to read the land from the map and vice versa. We never strayed high; it was too windy for that, but this was exactly the sort of terrain to get to grips with navigation.

"Sometimes when you're out on the hill and it's windy and raining it's easy to follow a boundary line on the map instead of a path," warned Carl. "The thing is that some of these boundaries end up running over the edge of cliffs, so you need to be sure before going on to the hill."

Gradually, we learnt the practical

value of our lessons. We worked out how many paces we each took to walk 100 metres and could then measure distance as we strode out. The squiggles on the map became hill tops, slopes and cliffs, white spaces meant flat ground, and by taking a compass bearing we confirmed that we were going in the right direction.

Confidence began to grow, and by day two even the sky looked brighter. By lunchtime we had honed our navigation skills and were heading for the summit of Tryfan, an Alpine-style 3,000ft mountain that rises from the Ogwen Valley like a huge rock fortress. As we scrambled through heather on to boulder-strewn slopes to the top, the clouds rolled in and out, giving tantalising glimpses of the surrounding mountains.

We descended through a rocky gully, slithering down paths that had turned into streams in the unrelenting rain, gingerly lowering ourselves down rock "steps" that seemed impassable at first glance. All the time under Carl's watchful eye.

"It's funny," said Jonathan, as we reached the bottom. "You look down and think, 'I can't get down that', but you do it and realise it's all right. Then you look up at where you've been and think, 'I just came down there!'"

Plas Y Brenin runs mountaineering and navigation courses all year round. For a brochure call 01690 720214. The British Mountaineering Council (0161 445 4747) has a list of recognised centres and instructors providing similar courses throughout the country.

We think it's time you went away

Hotel breaks: 2 nights for the price of 1

The Independent and the Independent on Sunday would like to invite you to take a hotel break and enjoy two nights for the price of one.

Simply pay for one night's bed and breakfast and you will get the next night, including breakfast, free.

All the participating hotels are members of the Minotel consortium and many will allow you to enjoy a longer stay on the same basis: pay for two nights and stay for four, for example. You can check this with your chosen hotel when you make your initial reservation.

There are more than 80 Minotel hotels participating in this offer, all of which are located in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. All the hotels offer top-class comfort and pride themselves on providing a personal service that many larger establishments cannot match.

A list of the participating Minotel hotels was printed in Sunday's Independent on Sunday and Monday's Independent.

How to Qualify

To qualify for your 2 for 1 break, you must collect four differently numbered tokens from the nine we are printing in The Independent and the Independent on Sunday until 19 January. Token 8 is printed today. Attach your tokens to the voucher printed today, then follow the booking procedure de-

tailed below. Also published today is a confirmation booking form. You only need to complete this form if you are not paying by credit card. A final voucher and confirmation booking form will be printed in tomorrow's Independent on Sunday.

Booking Procedure

- All bookings must be made by telephone direct with each individual hotel. Callers must identify themselves as "Independent 2 for 1 voucher holders" as some hotels may have standard or superior rooms available at normal rates when their allocation of 2 for 1 rooms is full.
- All bookings must be pre-paid and reservations can be confirmed over the telephone by credit card holders at most hotels.
- Voucher holders wishing to pay by other methods can make a provisional booking by phone which the hotel will keep open for 48 hours pending receipt of the confirmation booking form and payment which will be acknowledged by the hotel on the day it is received. If you do not receive such an acknowledgement within seven days, you are advised to contact the hotel.
- Vouchers must be surrendered on arrival at the hotel and can be used on one occasion only.
- Vouchers are valid from 11 January to 30 September 1997.



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Terms and Conditions

1. To participate in our 2 for 1 offer you must collect 4 differently numbered tokens including 1 from the Independent on Sunday and attach them to a voucher. If you would like to take more than one 2 for 1 break, just collect four tokens and one voucher for each separate occasion that you wish to go.

2. The voucher may be redeemed at any participating Minotel hotel (as listed in the Independent on Sunday, 12 January, and The Independent, 13 January) for one free night's bed and breakfast for two people in a standard twin or double room when the first night's bed and breakfast is pre-paid at the price indicated.

3. Some hotels, at the proprietor's discretion, will accept the voucher for longer stays on the same basis, so you can stay for 4 nights for the price of 2 for example. Please check with your chosen hotel when making your booking.

4. The voucher does not cover payment for any other meals or services that may be requested by the holder and cannot be used with any other offer, saving or discount that may be available at the hotel.

7 days in advance

7. Vouchers are valid from 11 January to 30 September 1997.

8. Vouchers must be surrendered on arrival at the hotel and can be used on one occasion only.

9. No-shows or cancellations less than 14 days prior to the anticipated date of arrival at the hotel will render the voucher invalid and the holder liable for payment to full for each night booked, including those previously offered free.

10. All bookings made under this promotion are subject to availability and to the selected hotel's own policy of availability and terms and conditions, except where those conditions may differ from those in which these conditions shall prevail.

11. Photographs of tokens and vouchers are not acceptable.

12. One child under the age of 12 years at the time of booking and sharing a room with two adults will be accommodated free of charge but all meals, including breakfast, will be chargeable.

13. The descriptions and prices contained in this offer have been supplied by participating hotels. While every effort has been made to ensure their accuracy prior to publication, no responsibility can be taken by Newsprint Publishing plc. Changes to Promotions or Minotel for any error, omission or changes that may take place afterwards without notice.

THE INDEPENDENT Confirmation Booking Form

Please Note: If you have confirmed your booking by credit card you do not need to use this form to confirm your reservation. Only fill in this form if you wish to pay by other means, after you have made your provisional booking by telephone.

Name of hotel: _____
Date of arrival: _____
Date of departure: _____
Total number of nights accommodation required: _____
Number of nights to be paid for (1/2 the number shown above): _____
@ the price of £ _____ per room per night = £ _____

I enclose my cheque no. _____ for the above amount

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Hotel Breaks: 2 nights for the price of 1 Voucher

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TOKEN 8

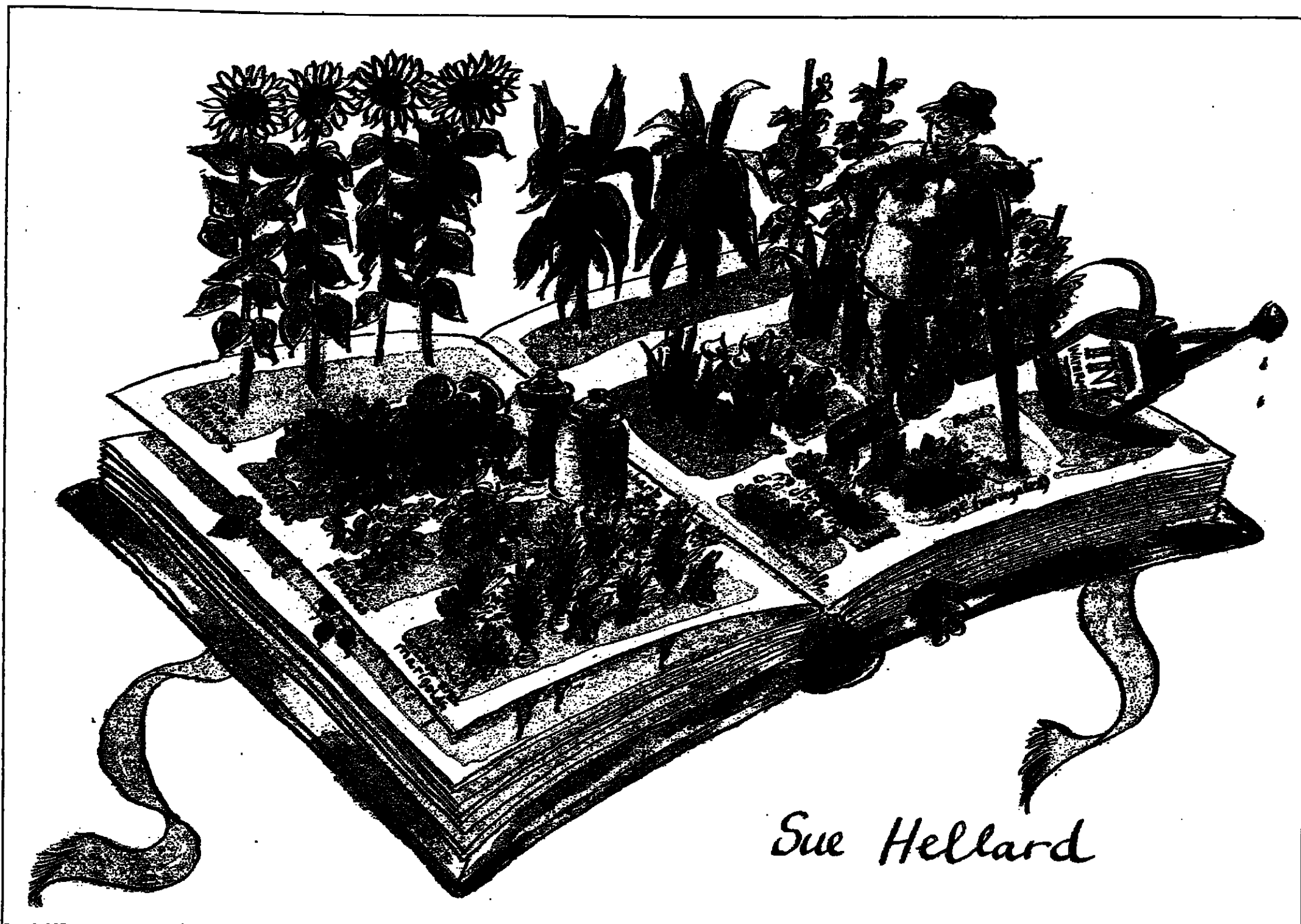
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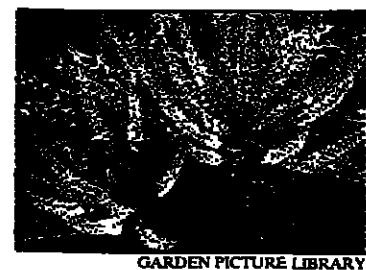
Independent 2 for 1 voucher holders booking dinner for the first night of their stay, will receive a complimentary bottle of house wine at participating hotels as indicated by asterisks - see list of participating hotels.

A reminder of past triumphs

Anna Pavord is inspired by a meticulous gardening diary



cuttings



Flower of the hour: *Mahonia x media* 'Charity' (above). Why? Because the shrub, though gaunt in an Enoch Powell sort of way, has great presence. It is stiffly upright, formal and evergreen, with leaflets arranged in pairs along a rib more than a foot long. Spikes of yellow flowers, which smell of cowslips, burst in clumps from the growing tips of the upright branches. They start in November and sometimes last until February. 'Charity' ('Faith' and 'Hope' inevitably followed) was picked out from a line of plants growing in Louis Russell's Windlesham Nursery by Sir Eric Savill of the Savill Gardens, Windsor. It was one of many crosses that have been made between *Mahonia lomarifolia* which has the best leaves of the tribe and *M. japonica* which has the best scent. The original plant still grows in the Savill Gardens and is 14ft high and almost as wide. Mahonias flourish in sun or – usefully – in quite deep shade and need little attention apart from a thick mulch once a year.

The three most important guardians of Britain's historic parks and gardens – The National Trust, The Royal Parks and English Heritage – have joined together to set up a three-year programme to train the head gardeners of the future. Unlike other horticultural courses, this modern apprenticeship will lay great emphasis on the disappearing skills and craftsmanship which are essential in the maintenance of historic gardens.

Twelve apprentices, most of them between the ages of 16 and 21, have already been recruited. The first year involves 10 weeks of intensive course work at Cannington College, Somerset and 39 weeks of practical gardening in one of the properties looked after by the organisations that are sponsoring the scheme.

Jim Marshall, one of the National Trust's garden advisors said: "This training in traditional garden crafts is essential if we hope to equip tomorrow's gardeners with the necessary skills." For further information about the scheme, which is designed to redress the present lack of work-based training, contact John McKennell, Vocational Training and Development Advisor, The National Trust Cornwall Regional Office, Lanhydrock, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 4DE (01208 74281).

Angus White of Architectural Plants, Nuthurst, Horsham, West Sussex is having a monster Winter Sale, with 20 per cent off the price of all plants and terracotta pots. There is a fabulous selection of plants at the nursery: ferns for cool conservatories, palms, spiky cordylines, fat juicy echeverias. White – as the name of the nursery suggests – is only interested in plants with presence. Architectural Plants is open Mon-Sat (9am-5pm). For further details phone 01403 891772. The sale continues until the end of January.

One of my good intentions when we first moved to our house was to keep a record of work that we did in the garden. If nothing else, I thought it might at least stop me making the same mistake twice. But such was the chaos of taking on a house where ivy grew up the inside of the walls as well as the outside, that the first years galloped by unrecorded. Looking back, I see only a blur of small children, too many animals and huge bonfires.

It took us 18 months of hacking through brambles, elder and seedling sycamores to find what we supposed were the boundaries of the garden. When finally I broke through to a stone wall at the back of what is now the top lawn, I came face to face with farmer Fry, our neighbour, feeding sheep in the adjoining field. "Well," he said, after gazing at me steadily for a while. "I haven't seen anyone up there since the big war." He meant the first one of course.

So quite a lot had happened before one January, four years after our arrival, I finally wrote "Garden Book" on an old school exercise book and started making notes. "Attacked the boundary hedge, got rid of remaining brambles and rebuilt two sections of the retaining wall." A lot of attacking goes on in the early entries. It makes me feel exhausted just to read about it.

But, usefully, the garden diary jogs the memory about things I'd forgotten. It notes

the date that the old apple tree, the centre-piece of the round border, blew down in a terrible gale. It records the price of the railway sleepers (£5.60 each) that I got in to edge the sides of the asparagus bed. I had eight more delivered last week to edge paths in the vegetable garden. The price? £20 each plus VAT.

The problem with garden books is that when there is most to write about, there is least time to write. But I hope to do better this year than I have in the past, spurred on by the garden books kept by my great-uncle. They are models of precision and clarity, and from time to time I take them down from my shelves and read them as a special sort of treat. Or rather a re-treat – from the chaos of the real world.

He was a schoolmaster of a type that scarcely exists now: ascetic, solitary, a traveller, formidably well read. He started his garden books when he retired to a cottage with an acre of garden, and they stretch from March 1945 until June 1962 when the last entry reads "My garden is a jungle. Ill health." He died a month later.

His special interests were carnations, auriculars, sweet peas and chrysanthemums, on all of which he made meticulous notes. He planted two orchards and kept a huge vegetable garden, harvesting at least two dozen different crops each year, all plotted on a neat map of the gar-

den. In January 1958 he notes "Cleaned blackcurrants and mulched them with compost, fire ash and a sprinkling of Gro-more fertiliser. Labelled the bush second from the south-west end with three metal tags. It is very vigorous and bore the best crops of berries."

Now that's the kind of thing I keep meaning to do: mark the blackcurrant bushes that seem best to propagate from. Notes jotted down about particularly good forms of plants jog the memory when the right moment comes for taking seed or cuttings. I had some extraordinary opium poppies in the garden this year, but only got round to marking some of the seed pods with twists of green wire. Finding those at seed-collecting time was easy, but the rest may be lost for ever.

In spring 1953 my great-uncle was planting out one of his old carnation beds as a cutting garden, edged with mignonette. In the first row he had love-in-a-mist 'Miss Jekyll' and Californian poppies. In the second he planted sweet sultan and clarkia, in the third Shirley poppies and *Chrysanthemum tricolor*. In the fourth row he put English pot marigolds, a variety called 'Radio' (still available from Chilterns Seeds) and finished off with a row of crimson godetias and larkspur. The choice perfectly encapsulates cottage gardening of the Fifties.

The further back in time you go, the more riveting it becomes to read in garden

books and diaries about gardens being created, and the minutiae of the work being carried out. On 17 January 1653, the diarist John Evelyn noted that he "began to set out the oval garden at Sayes Court which was before a rude orchard. All the rest an intire field of 100 acres without any hedge". This was the beginning of the work that eventually made Sayes Court, Deptford, one of the most important gardens of the 17th century.

Parson Woodforde is best known for the gargantuan meals that he put away, all noted in the diary he kept between 1758 and 1802, but between "the neck of mutton boiled, the goose, the roast beef and the plumb puddings", Woodforde found time on 4 January 1782 to "enlarge my Pleasure Ground a Trifle by taking in part of the small Field near Goochs House". In January 1790, he noted "the Season so remarkable mild and warm that my Brother gathered this morning in my Garden some full blown Primroses".

My own garden book records that in the January I started it, the hellebores were in full bloom by now. The poor things started to pierce through the ground round about Christmas this season, but the bitter wind and the iron-hard ground have dissuaded them from coming on any further. Very sensible. But I'm longing for their appearance and have promised myself a visit to R&D Plants to choose

some extra hellebores when the flowers are full out. Then I can pick the kind I like best, and don't have.

The practical Romans originally missed out January and February altogether from their calendar, arranging a 10-month year tied to what farmers needed to do on the land. That would suit gardeners, too. January and February are the worst months for trying to do anything that involves the earth or its plants. But they are good months for planning. Or should be.

Harold Nicolson, who laid out the garden at Sissinghurst with his wife, Vita Sackville-West, noted in his diary a futile planning session in the dog days after Christmas 1946. "In the afternoon I moon about with Vita, trying to convince her that planning is an element in gardening. I want to show her that the top of the moat-walk bank must be planted with forethought and design. She wishes just to jab in the things which she has left over. The tragedy of the romantic temperament is that it dislikes form so much that it ignores the effect of masses. She wants to put in stuff which 'will give a lovely red colour in the autumn'. I wish to put in stuff which will furnish shape to the perspective. In the end we part, not as friends." Poor man. VSW has usually been given the lion's share of the credit for the garden at Sissinghurst. Nicolson's diary gives us the means to redress the balance.

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with Lindsay Calder
Carmen get it

This morning in the locker room I noticed that the woman who has daily personal training from Carl also has two HRT patches.

At least, I assume that's what they were. You don't stick the Nicorette ones on your buttocks, do you? At first I thought they might have been someone else's soggy corn plasters that she had inadvertently sat on whilst drying between her toes, but they did seem to be clinging on with some purpose.

I am more than mildly curious about her, but can only build up a picture from the facts before me: her choice of underwear (unsuitable), the Mulberry bag that she stuffs her trainers into (a little extravagant), a Donna Karan trouser suit (not just DNKY) and today there was something else: Carmen rollers.

Well, the buttock patches give away her age, and if you tie these in with the undies (which barely cover them) what are the options? Divorced getting all HRT'd up and thongy ready for some action? Or an office affair - hence the stamina-improving sessions with Carl every morning, followed by

an hour in make-up and rollers? Then again, it may just be an attempt to rejuvenate body and marriage, but that's far too boring.

Now my preferred option: she is a career woman, but has been a martyr to her profession, has never had time for lovers, and now, at that hormonal turning-point in her life, finds herself alone and fed up with being cast as the firm headmistress.

This lady has finally decided to get big hair and go for it: patches, panties, press-ups, the works. If you can't quite face the patches and the panties yourself, go for the Carl and Carmen option. Carl, or a similar model, is available from most gyms at around £20 a session and Carmen rollers (surprisingly, not exclusively available from car boot sales) are still being made and can be found at most department stores.

The standard plastic set of 20 costs £14.99; a thicker, rubberised set, £21.99; Carmen Elite, £24.99. And, if you are after really big hair, Carmen Elite Jumbo costs £29.99.

Perhaps they could come up with a natty little portable set for the gym?

Agony of eggstasy

Why Easter's here, by Debbie Davis

Imagine a world where one celebration runs into another, and your favourite season lasts for ever. If this sounds like nirvana then you can see it for yourself next week, as Easter meets the tail end of Christmas on supermarket shelves. Safeway starts selling Easter eggs on Monday and the other major supermarkets will follow suit before the end of January. You have 72 days in which to buy.

If you like periods of abstinence in your consumer heaven, you may wonder at this need to launch Easter so early. A Safeway spokesperson said the supermarket chain responds to customer demand. "We are all busy people; our customers may want to buy Easter eggs as part of their normal shop."

But Judy Fenn, a shopper emerging from the Reading branch of Safeway, did not agree. "I haven't taken my holly down yet," she protested.

Mars Confectionery sides with the supermarkets. The company contends that since we buy £330m-worth of confectionery during Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Easter Sunday, it helps to be able to spread our shopping, physically and financially.

This theory lacks plausibility. Say you buy eggs 10 weeks early. No, darling, they're not for eating yet. You put them in the hiding place that failed you at Christmas. The eggs disappear but the children reassure you: there are still nine weeks to buy them again. Next time you put them in the garage. The week before Easter you go out there and find the eggs sitting in a pool of leaked paraffin. You throw them out and start again. This time you arrive at the eggs section to see Easter sold out.

The reality is that almost all eggs are bought at the last minute. Richard Frost, Cadbury's head of public relations, says: "Easter doesn't have the same dynamics as Christmas. It's a one-product occasion, with 90 per cent of eggs bought just before Easter Sunday."

So why do supermarkets take up valuable shelf space with a product they know isn't going to sell for weeks? And why is Easter on the shelves at the same time as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, both of which fall before it?

Two theories emerge. Mintel, the market research company, finds that Easter helps consumers to come out of their post-Christmas hibernation. The earlier this swing occurs, the better.

Robert East, professor of consumer behaviour at Kingston Business School in Surrey, agrees that holidays such as Easter have a powerful control over spending. "The associations of Easter are all pleasant," he says. "Eggs could be part of giving the store a nicer feel, in the same way that the smell of freshly baked bread makes it more attractive."

Mintel's research supports the second theory, put forward by an independent grocer who did not want to be named. Supermarkets know that food sales plummet after Christmas; eggs help to fill the shelves, and don't have to be paid for until after Easter. In fact, a confectionery buyer described to Mintel how he has to fight off confectionery salesmen, who see the supermarkets as stock-holders for their product.

By extending the selling period for Easter eggs, supermarkets give the manufacturers an advantage over other confectionery and gift lines, and strengthen their own hand when nego-



tiating a deal. Neil Mason, of Mintel, says: "The margins on Easter eggs are higher than on other chocolate products. Shoppers may trade up, and spend more on eggs than they were buying boxed chocolates, for example."

Consumers are certainly vulnerable to manipulation. Three out of four shoppers enter the supermarket without a shopping list. Jeff Harris, of the research company Harris International, describes them as arriving semi-comatose. But he adds: "Supermarkets fail to sell to their customers all the things they could have, partly because they clutter the shelves with things like Easter eggs when no one is buying them."

Supermarkets, however, are careful with their shelf space. Efficient Consumer Response (ECR) is the latest American formula which helps super-

markets to have as little product as possible at any one time in their supply chains. They order stock in small amounts, not once a week, but daily. For some products, supermarkets are proposing twice, even three-daily deliveries. One wonders whether shelf fillers will start to outnumber customers.

At home, ECR would mean one pint from the milkman in the morning. A request for rice pudding would trigger sending someone out for another pint. Only when football is rained off and you arrive home with half the team do you buy six pints from the supermarket. Will the family notice you've been making efficient consumer responses all day? Will they care? But at least you won't have wasted any milk.

With so much detail in the life of a supermarket, managements risk inform-

ation overload. And this is before they begin analysing the data spewing out from the 20 million spy cards held by customers using loyalty schemes. By possessing the exact measurements of all your shoppers you understand them every need - with the exception of when they want to buy Easter eggs.

The purpose here is to respond to our need to be cheered up, rather than our need to buy. In this scenario, supermarket shelves leave nothing to chance by putting a little of everything on the shelves. Of course, you can always derail the information-obsessed supermarket manager. Next time you fill in an application form for a spy card, do as my menopausal, childless friends do. Say you are married, aged 21, with four children. Then watch nappies eclipse the Easter displays.

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Look who's talking

I may be good to talk, but latest research for BT has shown that the more it spends on advertising, the more negative its public profile. Which is why those watching TV over Christmas and the New Year will have seen the telephone giant perfecting a new public face – meticulously in tune with the caring, sharing Nineties.

“Social responsibility” is the latest marketing wheeze. Businesses and organisations – from Tesco to the Co-Operative Bank – urge us not only to buy their goods and services, but like and respect their values, too. The new commercials feature a sequence of apparently unrelated images of people and experiences, such as a wedding party and a small boy listening to his pregnant mother’s swollen tummy. At first glance it could be an ad for anything, Hanson, maybe, or Midland Bank. But no, it’s for one of Britain’s largest advertisers: BT – a company better known for persuading us to spend more time (and money) on the phone than caring about others. Its aim? To position itself as a responsible corporate citizen.

"It is BT's view that corporate reputation will be increasingly important in the future," says Jeremy Miles, group account director at BT's advertising agency. "Already, it is a feature which distinguishes BT from other telecoms operators." Trouble is, no-one knows it.

According to Jackie Kavanagh, head of corporate campaigns at BT: "People increasingly expect companies to play a more active role in society." Aside from charitable donations, BT has worked with local communities on a range of economic regeneration initiatives, she claims – not to mention job creation and schools support. "The time is coming when good products and services alone just won't be enough."

BT has a number of different strands to its gargantuan advertising campaign, Miles explains. There are ads to encourage us to phone abroad and ads to woo small businesses. Then there are ads to promote its numerous discount packages – like Friends and Family, for which a new commercial featuring former cast members from *EastEnders* broke last Monday. Previous stars, including the faces behind Dirty Den, Arthur, Sharon and Michelle,

arrange a reunion. And, perhaps most memorably, there are ads to encourage us 'It's good to talk'. The company even funded its own TV programme to promote better telephone communication - the show, *Now We're Talking* hosted by Philip Schofield, went out on ITV a fortnight ago.

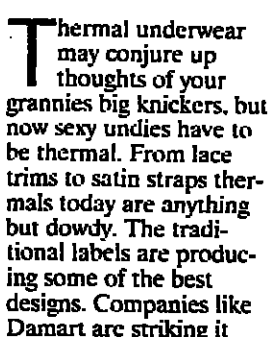
The new social responsibility campaign, however, is something else. Internal research for BT suggests people are beginning to get fed up with BT ads. And small wonder: latest industry estimates suggest the company spends more than £150m on advertising each year. The good causes push may cost a mere snip at £2m, but BT sees it as a critical investment – to stem a negative trend before it really catches on.

Anecdotal evidence suggests widespread surprise at BT's change in advertising tack, according to Miles. As for whether it's achieving the desired effect — well, it's just too soon to say. However, companies like BT eager to raise the profile of their corporate conscience have to tread carefully. For while the Nineties consumer expects businesses to accept a degree of social, community or environmental responsibility, they also increasingly treat any advertising or marketing communication with a generous dose of healthy scepticism.

BT's size and market dominance is a particular obstacle which must be overcome, it seems. Does such an obvious market leader really need to advertise so heavily? Jo Smith, a 27-year-old PA working in Finchley, North London thinks not. "If it's such a good corporate citizen, why doesn't it spend less on advertising and cut the cost of calls," she asks.

BT's claims it must advertise heavily to protect its business from growing competition. Recent research conducted for the company shows the British talk one-third less on the phone than their US counterparts — so there's still plenty of room for growth, it adds.

However Steve Carpenter, 30, a management consultant from Rugby is not entirely convinced. BT's involvement in *Now We're Talking* was to champion the art of conversation and encourage more effective communication, he points out. "Fine sentiments," he comments. "But is it really much more than just another way to get consumers to spend more?"



**boldly with red and Han-
ros' lacy cream vests are
too nice to be worn just
as underwear. Wear all
of the above with a little
cardi or under a strappy
dress for a warmer
winter look.**

1 Above: Red long sleeve thermal top, £11.99, by Damart, 235 Regent Street, London

W1, and branches nationwide (enquiries 01274 510000). Below: Red thermal long johns, £11.99, by Damart, as before.

2 Above: Cream short sleeve thermal top with lace trim, £69.50, by Hanro, available from Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW1 (enquiries

0171-245 6231). Below:
Cream thermal long
johns, £55, by Hanro,
as before.

3 Above: Black thermal vest with satin straps, £17.99, by Damart, as before. Below: Black thermal knickers with lace trim, £10.99, by Damart, as before.

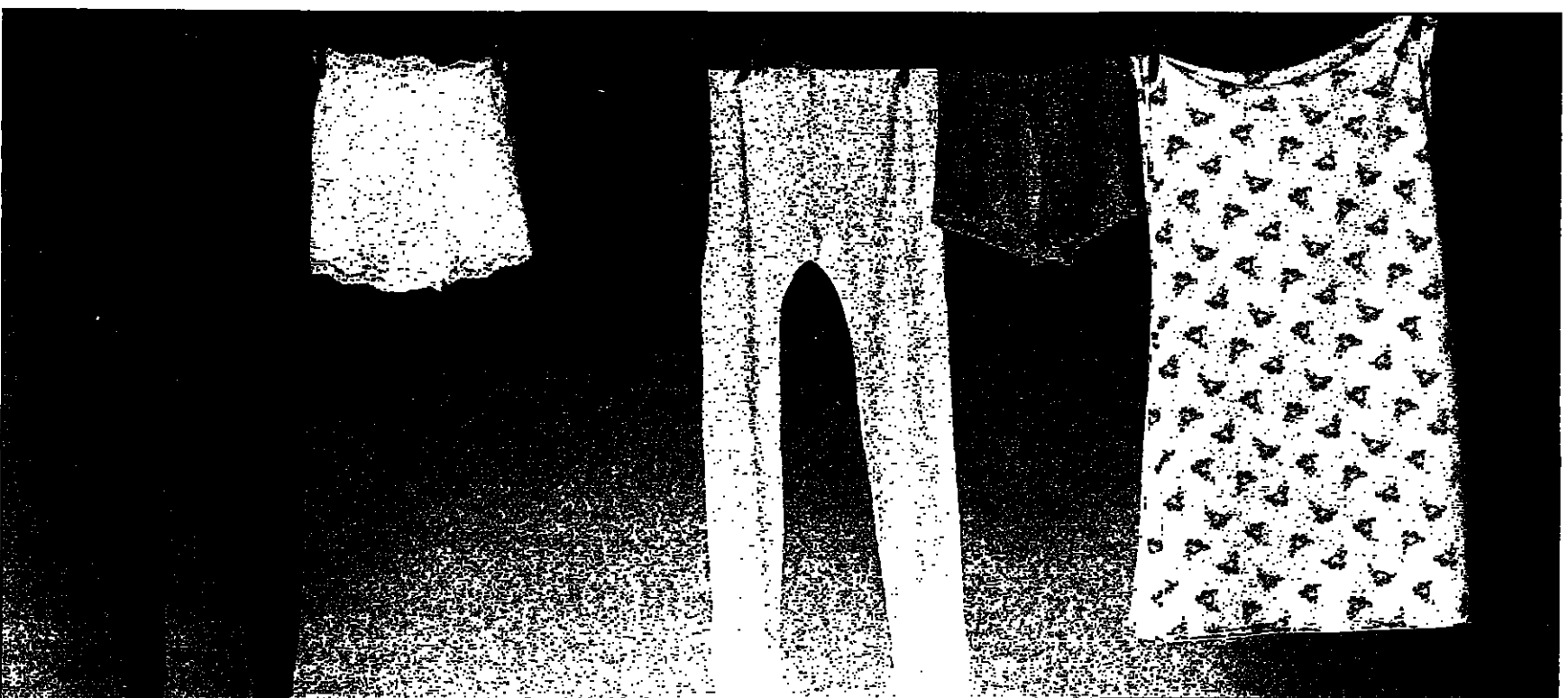
4 Above: Cream sleeveless vest with satin bias trim, £36.50, by Hanro, as before. Below: Cream thermal knickers with lace trim, £49.50, by Hanro, as before.

5 Above: Grey long sleeve thermal top, £12.99, by Knickerbox, 467 Oxford Street, London W1 and branches

nationwide (enquiries 0171-284 1744). Below: Grey thermal knickers, £7.99, by Knickerbox, as before.

6 Above and below:
Cherub print nightie
£29.95, by Knickerbox,
as before.

Stylist: Holly Davies
Photos: Tom Buckingham



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For Sales

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...helps you
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Shoes slip away
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SO FEATHERWEIGHT
you'll forget you're
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IDEAL for BUSINESS
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SO CUSHIONY
SOFT & FLEXIBLE
...you can fold the
men made uppers
& sole IN HALF

Featherlight
...it's like walking
ON AIR

You will look smart &
feel warm, no matter
how bad the weather!
These NEW SNOW SHOES are
so light & flexible yet so hard
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and casual wear. Inspect them
at home for 28 days. If you are
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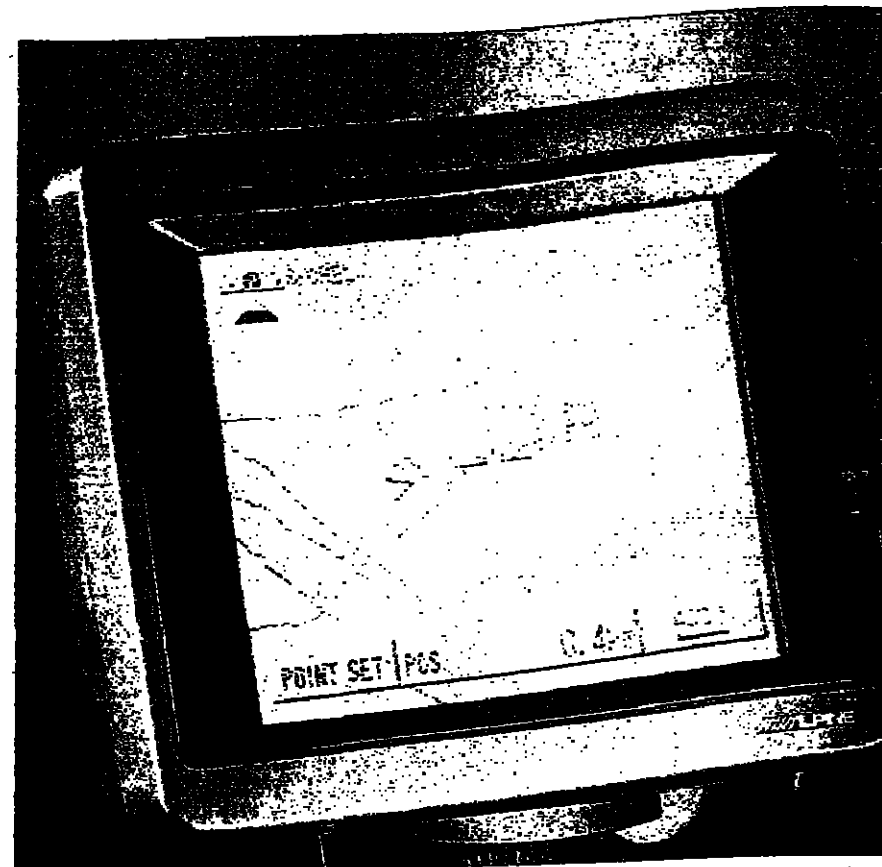
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Digital maps are the key to the success of satellite navigation systems: far left, Bosch's Blaupunkt TravelPilot; left, the Carin system made by Philips; above Alpine Electronics' Route Guidance Navigation system

Show me the way to go home

The heavens know your every move with satellite navigation. By James Ruppert

The road atlas is dead, so throw it away. The future of getting from A to B is now in space, because the latest in-car gizmo is Sat Nav, or satellite navigation. This year's Ford Mondeo and Volkswagen Passat will, if Sat Nav equipped, tell you the quickest way home, or the best way to reach your next business appointment.

Alpine Electronics, Bosch and Philips have all unveiled their own systems in the UK. At their simplest, these only require you to start the engine, select a destination and let the computer do the directing via a synthesised voice and a small monitor near the dashboard for a visual prompt. The key to all this is in the heavens: 24 satellites operate the Global Positioning System - GPS. The information received from them is made even more accurate by wheel sensors and a compass, or gyroscope, fitted to the car. Then, to make sense of all the data, a map stored in a boot-mounted CD-Rom records the location of the car and its intended route. You may already have seen (or, indeed,

already have bought) one of the existing CD-Rom or solid-state road navigation gadgets, such as the Psion Personal Navigator or the Philips Routefinder. These easily beat the satellites on price (around £150) but are cartographically challenged because you have to know where you are at each point. With GPS, the heavens know your every move.

Yet never mind the space age satellite technology, it is the digital maps that are the key to the systems success. If they are wrong, you will obviously get lost. To see exactly how these work I spent a day on the road with ETAK, a digital mapping company which produces the CD-Roms for the Blaupunkt TravelPilot system made by Bosch. Currently this system has the most comprehensive maps of the country, and it is easy to see why.

Anthony Lewis, co-ordinator for the field data capture teams, has to drive down every single road they are mapping. "We take the existing Ordnance Survey information, which is paper-based maps, and then digitise it. But you can only do

that by going out into the real world to see how streets connect, what the traffic flow is, how many exits there are on a roundabout, where the dead ends are, that sort of thing."

It has been hard work, but in just nine months most of the major routes, towns and cities have been mapped.

Using the system could not be simpler. I slipped behind the wheel of the Mondeo in a grid-locked Hammersmith and turned the key. The GPS told me exactly where I was: Beryl Road, London W6. I decided to go to Hamilton Road. Using a hand-held control pad I needed only to tap in the first few letters before the long list of Hamilton Roads came on to the screen. I scrolled through to find the one in Twickenham that I wanted. The TravelPilot thought about it for a few seconds, then told me where to go. A large directional arrow appeared on the LCD screen while a soothing - yet confident - female voice told me to go straight ahead and then turn right at the next junction.

"People don't like to be told what to do

by a male voice," Mr Lewis explained. "This one we call Kate, which is ETAK backwards. Originally we had a German lady issuing the instructions, but we had to tell Bosch that it would not go down too well in the UK."

For a moment - though her directions are deliberate and easy to follow - part of the fun was actually ignoring instructions. The voice became a little more urgent, telling me to turn around. Then the TravelPilot confidently rerouted me back to the programmed destination. All the time the idiot-sized arrow on the LCD screen kept pointing the way. There was a distance countdown to the junction, and whilst idling at traffic lights I could look at larger maps to see exactly where I was. A nice touch: when I arrived at Hamilton Road a chequered flag came up on the screen.

Mr Lewis reckons that it would take no longer than half-an-hour to grasp the system, and in fact just a few seconds of prodigal got me to where I wanted to go. Clearly utterances of "I've got no sense of

direction" will no longer be a legitimate excuse. However, there is a catch: the price.

To fit a Blaupunkt TravelPilot, Philips Carin, or Alpine Route Guidance Navigation system to your existing car will cost £3,000 to £3,500 depending on the model. Remember, though, that CD players and video-recorders cost an arm and a leg when first launched in the Eighties, and industry watchers are convinced that hardware costs will tumble during the next few years.

At the moment the easiest way to enjoy Sat Nav is to buy a brand-new car with the equipment as an option. Volkswagen's acclaimed Passat will have the Blaupunkt system from summer 1997, when the mapping of the UK has been completed. They reckon it will add £1,500 to the cost of the car.

Ford will also be using this system, but have not committed themselves to a price or introduction date, except to say that it "will be an option on the Mondeo in early 1997". Philips claims that BMW, Range Rover, Mitsubishi, Daewoo and Nissan

will be offering their system by the middle of the year.

Although there isn't much to choose between the three systems, the Blaupunkt is reckoned to have the best mapping, which will cover all the major routes in the UK by the middle of the year. The Philips and Alpine won't be complete until 1998. What Alpine and Philips do have are points of interest such as programmes. The Philips also allows you to programme a route that avoids main roads.

The beauty of these CD-Rom-based systems is that the digital maps can be easily updated, and provide route guidance in Europe, in English. Travel guides for Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Italy are now available for the Blaupunkt system.

So the paper road atlas is dead, long live Sat Nav. Except that I wouldn't chuck your A to Z in the bin just yet. Sat Nav is still an expensive executive in-car toy, albeit a very useful one. Wait until Sat Nav goes on the consumer goods shelves next to CDs and video players.

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Keep on truckin' - the guzzler returns

By Gavin Green

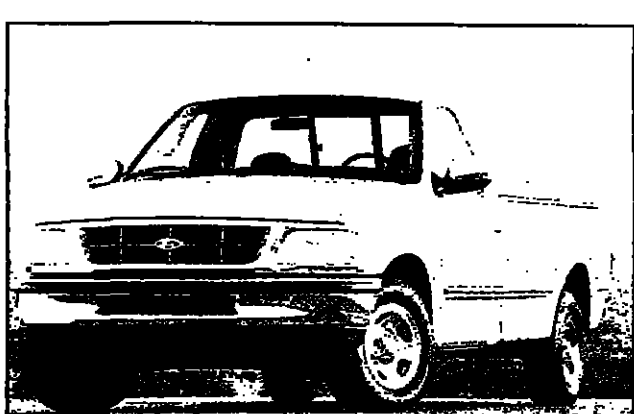
As one famous American writer might have said about one famous American institution: news of the Yank Tank's death has been greatly exaggerated. Sure, the old 20ft long, two-and-a-half ton V8 sedan - which wallowed its way down freeways while guzzling gas - may be almost dead. But in its stead is a vehicle just as big, just as fuel thirsty and just as popular.

The best selling "car" in America last year (and the year before, and the year before that) wasn't even a car at all. It was a truck: the Ford F150 pick-up. Last year, Ford sold 78,000 in the USA. Ford already sells more light trucks to private buyers than it does cars in America. It reckons that will be true of the total market soon. Already, three of the four best-sellers in America are trucks.

By trucks, the Americans mean pick-ups, off-roaders, and big people carriers - rather than the big artics that clog the M25. They're typically sold to private buyers in place of normal cars. Even the Japanese, who made their name in America selling little fuel-sipping hatchbacks at a time when the oil seemed to be running out, are getting in on the act. Every Japanese maker now sells light trucks too. And they're almost as big, thirsty, and mean as the trucks sold by Ford, General Motors and Chrysler.

The oil clearly isn't about to run out. And, as if to celebrate, the Americans are having one hell of a party until somebody finally tells them to start behaving themselves. With gasoline at \$1.30 a gallon (about 90 pence a gallon or about 20p a litre) there isn't much incentive to be good.

Ford's president, Australian-born Jac Nasser, reckons the popularity of the Ford F150 and other pick-ups is due to America's enduring love affair



The Ford F150, best-selling "car" in the US last year

with the horse. "There's something wild and outdoorsy about the pick-up. They're sporty, fast and expressive. The pick-up is the nearest thing there is to a horse."

I had a brief go in a 5.4-litre V8-powered F150 on a recent trip to America, and there's little doubting the appeal: you sit up high, have a tremendously powerful engine at your disposal, and mix sports car performance with commercial vehicle toughness. And it looks great, too, in a macho American sort of way. Sure, you'll be lucky to do 15mpg, but who cares when a refill costs only about £15?

Common sense, of course, dictates that driving a "car" that has half its length, and sometimes more, devoted to cargo carrying is dumb. The typical pick-up actually has less cabin space than a family car. But it's fast, cheap (a V8 F150 costs only £9,500), solid, and has great youth-cred. American kids no longer hanker after Corvettes or Mustangs or T-birds. They want pick-up trucks. And the brighter the colour, the bigger the wheels and tyres, and the larger the motor, the better. Like jeans, T-shirts, branded trainers and dumb haircuts they've become part of the American way of life.

Personally, I think they're also a reaction against the little Japanese-built - or inspired - hatchbacks that Americans were forced to buy, a decade or so ago, but never liked. The truck is a cheaper, faster, sportier version of the old Yank Tank. But while large sedan sales dipped by a further seven per cent last year, truck sales - especially large off-roaders - were up by 77 per cent.

Many American car makers can't quite believe this popularity, nor can they believe that these mostly crude and technically old-fashioned machines, with their voracious fuel consumptions have almost single-handedly repelled the threatened Japanese invasion of their market. Most forecast an eventual downturn in their appeal. All it needs is a big hike in the price of fuel and they could be history.

Yet Americans have been expecting a fuel price hike for years. Despite carbon dioxide emission promises, fashionable green politics, Rio summits and a Democratic president, it's never happened. Taxing fuel more is politically unacceptable in America. It constitutes a tax on mobility. Which means folks can keep on buying their trucks and to hell with those little itty-bitty foreign cars.

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A change of heart

The Parsons were looking for a semi, but ended up with a boat. By Rosalind Russell

Jennifer and Donald Parsons provide a classic case – house hunters who give a detailed brief, to an estate agent and end up buying something different. Preparing for retirement, the couple had decided to sell their Kent home and look for a smaller house, perhaps near water and with a decent piece of land around it. A couple of years passed, but nothing came up.

"Then one day we had a trip to Henley and got talking to some people who lived on narrow boats," says Jennifer. "It changed our lives."

The Parsons booked a holiday on a narrow boat and read every available piece of information about them. Then they rang Calcutt Maclean to say their search was over... and commissioned a Devizes boatyard to build them a 50ft narrow boat.

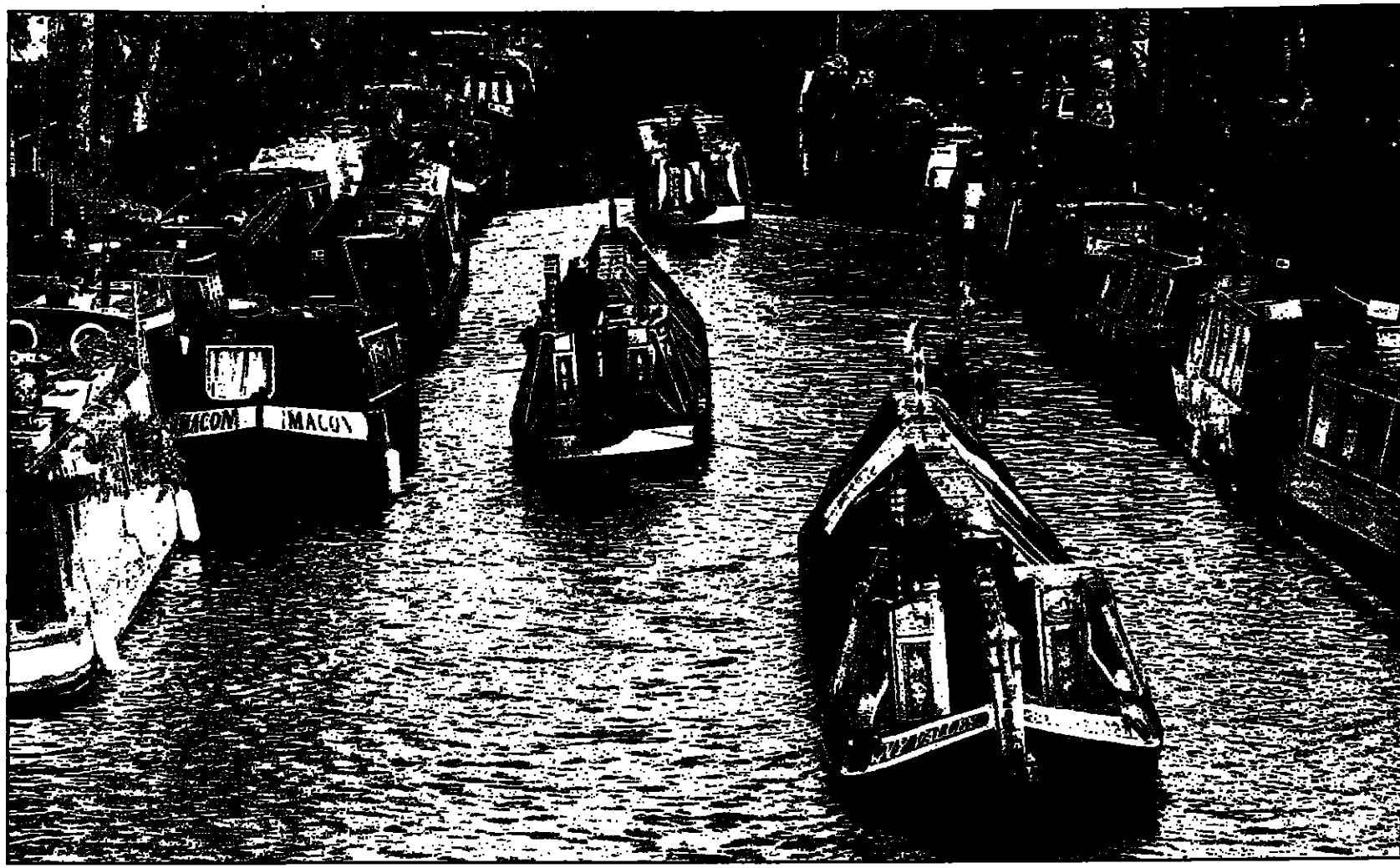
"It'll be ready in March and we're setting off to travel around some of Britain's 2,000 miles of canals. It's a great way to see the countryside without the pressure of traffic on the roads."

They won't miss the comforts of their old four-bedroom semi in Perts Wood. The new boat will have a fitted kitchen, a bathroom and a sitting room with a woodburning stove. A name has yet to be decided upon. Donald wanted to call it Miss Piggy but Jennifer favours Andante, the musical term meaning walking pace, which is the speed the boat moves at. They may compromise on Porcillus – Latin for female piglet.

"There is a great community spirit among those who live on narrow boats; people stop and talk. I don't suppose it will be all roses and may take a while to settle down. You can pay up to £80,000 for a narrow boat, but ours is more basic. You can have washing machines and tumble driers but I think that rather defeats the object."

Estate agents, if they are honest, are not immune to a change of heart. "I've lost count of the number of applicants who have stipulated a period cottage in the country, but who have eventually bought a newly built townhouse," says one weary agent. "When people realise they may have to compromise, often it forces a complete rethink. Or the practicalities kick in."

In James Boucher's case, the practicalities kicked out. Having sold their flat in London very quickly, he and wife Gail felt they would be in a strong position as



PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIP MEECH

cash buyers for a substantial period house in Kent. Agents Calcutt Maclean were enlisted to find the dream home and the Bouchers moved into a rented cottage for what they thought would be a brief stay. Two years later they were still there.

"We were looking for a four- or five-bedroom period house, possibly listed and with a lot of character and with up to three acres of land," says James. "There was just nothing for sale. One house we were keen on fell through. One of the houses we went for was on at £235,000 and went to best and final offers at £275,000. In the end, my wife was annoyed and I was frustrated. So I gave up and thought to hell with it, I'll buy a classic car instead."

An Aston Martin DB4 ate up a hearty slice of the money earmarked for the house and the estate agents instructed to downspec the price range. James claims his wife was so relieved he was happy again, she didn't demur about the cost of the car. Ho hum.

"To be honest I get a lot more enjoyment out of the car than a house. But we've just exchanged contracts on a house for less than £300,000 – my maximum before buying the car had been £400,000."

The Bouchers have bought a yeoman's hall house with a 1950s extension... but no garage.

According to Knight Frank, 16 per cent of house sales which fall through do

not just because of a dodgy survey, but because of a change of heart. One family buying a terraced house in Barnet rang the agent on the day of exchange, to say they would not be signing after all. They had been back to the house that morning and measured the width of the hall. They would not, said the head of the household, be able to wheel his son's motorbike through to the back garden. The deal was off.

Anthony Cane, of Strutt & Parker, always maintained that if you work in London, it is sensible to live as near as possible. He would never, ever, buy a house in the country and become a commuter. The Cane family now owns a newly renovated farmhouse in 30 acres

of Devon countryside. The house in London was sold and a flat bought for weekend use. I am London born and bred. When I was 12 my brother and I used to go and watch Chelsea play. If you told me two years ago I would have a house 200 miles from London, living 600ft up with views over Dartmoor, I would have said 'never in your wildest dreams'."

Before Sue and Anthony Cane bought the property, it was almost derelict. "At least I can't be proved wrong this time," says Anthony. "When buying our last two London houses, I said 'oh there's no point in paying for a survey, they are perfectly all right'. They both turned out to have dry rot. This time the place was in such a state, it had to have everything."

Best of three with a room with a view



Cobweb Cottage is a stone-built home situated on Stourton Hill in Warwickshire. Standing on the northern edge of the Cotswolds, it has views for miles across the valley. The property includes two outside studios as well as the three-bedroom semi-detached cottage, and has gardens enclosed by dry-stone walls. It is for sale through Knight Frank (01865 790077) for £180,000.



There must be a higher than average chance of spotting a monster from Tigh-na-Roinn, a three-bedroom house with unimpeded views across Loch Ness to the Monadhliath mountains. The renovated Forties house, sitting in five acres, comes with the right to keep and use a boat on the loch, and is 30 miles from Inverness. It is for sale through Savills at offers over £150,000 (01356 622187).



Ballowfield, a Grade II-listed four-bedroomed farmhouse, plus cottage, is in Wensleydale, north Yorkshire, with views to the river Ure. There is planning permission to convert a workshop into a two-bedroom annexe. £295,000, through GA Town & Country (01969 623451).

We marshalled eight families for a council of war

Daniel Butler on defeating the planning agents

Imagine the horror: a letter arrives one beautiful May morning informing you that a developer wants to plunk 20 caravans next to your isolated dream home. Escaping from neighbours was one of the main reasons for our purchasing a Welsh smallholding, three miles from the nearest town. Now suddenly a small village of transient tourists might be planted 50 yards from our front door.

Not that the idea came completely out of the blue. Our surveyor had warned us planning permission had once been granted for chalets on the adjacent field. Consent had lapsed long before we arrived, however, and the ludicrous development costs convinced us it could never go ahead. Now the possibility was here to haunt us again – this time scaled down to a more affordable (but equally unacceptable) scheme.

We sat staring at the letter in a state of disbelief. Once the immediate shock had passed, we rallied ourselves. Along with its clinical description of the scheme, the letter invited us to talk to the planning officer. I phoned immediately and found him extremely helpful. He explained that even though this scheme would not have been passed were it an original idea, the fact that consent had once been granted tied his hands. As an amended plan it could only be turned down on the barest of pragmatic grounds. He also warned us that legally his brief was to "facilitate development wherever possible" and it was not for him to find stumbling blocks.

The public file didn't tell us much, but it was clear that even in the Eighties the planners had been worried about access and had insisted on the construction of a

mile of new road – although there was no mention of this in the new plans. There were also inaccuracies – such as claiming the availability of mains water – and a vague mention of septic tanks, even though these were specifically barred in the original scheme.

We marshalled eight neighbouring families for a council of war and invited along local councillors. To our dismay we found the strong opposition was tempered with large doses of resignation: "Money talks in Wales," muttered one. "And money is something they must surely have."

Talking the issue through, however, we gathered further useful snippets of local gossip about water courses, badger runs and rights of way. Armed with this and our researches at the planning office, everyone was urged to write in stressing

practical reasons why the development should not go ahead. Picking up on the planners' own concerns, we would stress the question of access. Within a week the surprised planning department was deluged with complaints.

The critical weapon in our armoury proved the new access road. By carefully analysing the route, we discovered that consent from four local landowners was needed – but there was no mention of this in the confident wording of the plans. Remembering the council has to accept an application at face value unless concrete information to the contrary is available, we fired off another barrage of letters.

As a result, the planning officer wrote to the developer asking for documentary evidence that the access road could really be built. Crucially it was at this stage that

he demanded official consent forms signed by the landowners – something which would inevitably force the developers to begin forking out serious money.

That was August. Suddenly everything seemed to go into cold storage while we waited for news. For four months we held our breath, wondering if they would find enough money to buy off our farmers. In spite of the solidity of popular opposition, we were worried "every man has his price".

And then came the good news – the plans were being "withdrawn" while alternative access was considered. It appeared that at least one of the landowners had held firm and refused to sell. This was tempered by the knowledge that at least technically the plans were only shelved and might be re-submitted at any moment. With our new found understanding of the

planning laws, we knew this would mean the fight could pick up where it had begun – the 1988 precedent was still there.

Lessons have been learned, however, and we are confident that we would be able to defeat developers again with letters and attention to the minutiae of planning detail.

Fortunately it may not come to this: a local farmer has been asked if he is interested in purchasing the site by the developer. No doubt the asking price will be well above its agricultural value, but while none of us wants five acres of scrappy pasture with no water supply, it just could be worth it. Even at double the market value, after six months of sleepless nights and hours wasted in the planning department, £7,500 suddenly doesn't seem so steep for peace of mind.

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<p>Docklands</p> <p><i>Lincoln Rodley</i> LIMEHOUSE, DOCKLANDS E.14</p> <p>An immaculate first-floor apartment in the sought-after garden square development, completed by St George and it is on the original show flat directly overlooking Limehouse Marina and courtyard to the front.</p> <p>The development is entered via electronically operated wrought iron gates with concrete. The accommodation comprises 220' x 162' reception room with direct views over the Marina, fitted kitchen with built-in appliances, master bedroom with en suite bathroom, second bedroom, second bathroom, full gas-fired central heating, allocated off-street parking, quality fitted carpeting, excellent decorative order.</p> <p>£210,000 leasehold Telephone: 0171 512 9368</p>	<p>ALASKA (SEI) Bright and spacious one bed Art Deco style flat in sought after building. South facing garden views. Parking available. £95,000 0973 83 00 43 (mobile)</p> <p>ISLE OF DOGS, £29,950. Large studio. Balcony. Excellent light, FF kitchen/bathroom. Modern Riverside Dr. Leisure Facilities. L109 yrs Durables Wharf. 0171 438 4069.</p>	<p>Dorset/Hampshire</p> <p>WATERFRONTAGE, POOLE HARBOUR, DORSET</p> <p>£325,000 Chalet Bungalow with waterfrontage site to sandy beach, with boating slip and winch. Spectacular views over harbour to Purbeck Hills. Excellent decorative order throughout. 2 reception, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom and W.C., separate W.C. gth, hardwood floor coverings, part double glazed. Integral garage. Possible conversion of two further bedrooms.</p> <p>0171 223 5080 HAROLD GRIFFIN, 185 LAVENDER HILL, LONDON SW11 5TB</p>	<p>Midlands</p> <p>WARWICK PARK COURT The latest development from Central Homes plc. It is situated on the Warwick Road in Solihull and consists of 20 apartments and 2 two bed bungalows. Prices range from £54,950 to £99,950.</p> <p>Also Available Henley-in-Arden – A luxury development of 8 two bed apartments and 4 two bed town houses set within an enclosed courtyard accessed via electronic entrance gates. Prices from £79,950 to £95,950</p> <p>The Willows, Doge Lane Croft, Acocks Green. Only 1 four bedroom detached house competitively priced at £109,950</p> <p>Newhall Hill, City Centre, Birmingham. A development of 32 apartments containing a mixture of one and two beds with secure car parking. Prices from £39,950</p> <p>The Hawthorns, Hazel Avenue, Sutton Coldfield. The last two remaining three bedroom detached houses set in a quiet secluded location. Priced at £74,950</p> <p>CENTRAL HOMES PLC, 4 Sovereign Court, Graham Street, Birmingham B1 8JB Tel: 0121 293 3365 Fax: 0121 293 9767</p>	<p>New Homes</p> <p>SATURDAY 26th JANUARY</p> <p>NEW HOMES AND DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>To advertise in this feature, please contact: Lorraine/Jonathon on 0171 293 2302/2343</p>
<p>Services</p> <p>Why wait to move house to pay less for contents insurance?</p> <p>TRY US DIRECT ON 0800 444 777</p> <p>AA Home Insurance</p> <p><small>Approved Office: North Devon, Plymouth, Devon, Cornwall, Devon & Cornwall, Devon & Cornwall, Devon & Cornwall. Subject to underwriting. Insurance cover is provided by AA Home Insurance Services Ltd, an independent subsidiary company of the AA group of companies.</small></p>	<p>East Anglia</p> <p>Woodcock & Son</p> <p>EAST SUFFOLK. In quiet picturesque hamlet, an idyllic detached and beamed cottage, lovingly kept, with shower/bathrooms, 2 rec. fitted kit, conservatory, 3 beds, bath, garaging. Delightful gardens £165,000</p>	<p>Midlands</p> <p>Only Two Executive Homes Remaining at Woodcock & Son</p> <p>Brooklands Crescent, Coventry Plot 20 The "Bathurst" 4 bedroomed £188,950 Plot 21 The "Ashleigh" 5 bedroomed £215,000 Both ready for immediate occupation. Don't miss out. Please CALL for your private viewing. Tel: 01203 227557</p>	<p>To advertise in this section please call the Property Team on 0171 293 2302/2343.</p>	<p>0171 293 2302/2343</p>

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Cotswold Cottage is a stone-built house situated on a hill in the Cotswolds. It has a view of the Cotswold hills and the Cotswold Water Park. The house has three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a large kitchen. It is for sale through Knight Frank at £180,000.



There must be a higher than average chance of spotting a monster in the High-Rise. A three-bedroom house with a large garden and a view of the Cotswold hills. It is for sale through Knight Frank at £180,000.



B

Just to remind them, the Nationwide is opening a free helpline for anyone with a building society account to remind them what rate they are getting on their savings and what they could be getting elsewhere. The helpline will connect callers to a real person who will help to identify precisely what account the caller holds with which society, whether it is a postal account or a telephone account, instant access or notice account, and will then check the current rate for the balance the caller holds, and then compare it with the best rate Nationwide offers for an identical account.

We all know - or should do by now - that we are living through one of the great bull markets of this century. But how abnormal is it, and what are the implications for investors? One man who has dared to try and put the current bull market in its long-term global context is Dr Sandy Nairn, who runs the Edinburgh office of the Templeton fund management group. By analysing the performance of the Morgan Stanley world stock market index from 1954 until the present, he has produced some fascinating new data about the length and magnitude of market cycles in the post-war period.



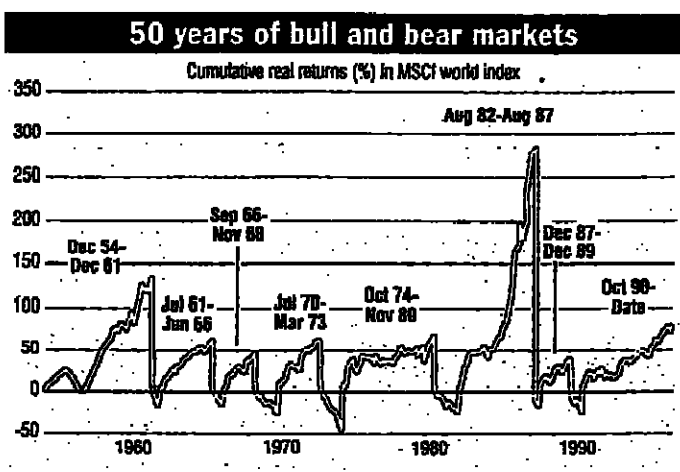
Jonathan Davis

For most of us, bear markets have to be endured if the fruits of the bull market beyond are to be enjoyed. In other words, no pain, no gain

His definition of a bear market is one in which the market indices fall by 15 per cent or more, measured from peak to trough. On that basis, we have lived through eight bull markets and seven bear runs in the last 42 years.

Similarly, the bull markets on average have produced a real (post-inflation) return to investors of 103 per cent and the bear phases a loss of 26 per cent.

By and large, bull markets run four times as long as bear markets and double investors' money in real terms. The succeeding bear market tends to last a year and costs investors a quarter of their wealth



Where does that leave the present bull market? According to Dr Nairn, the current upward trend in the stock market has now run for more than six years, since October, 1990.

That makes it either the longest or the second longest bull market since the war, depending on how precisely you measure the stock market rally in the mid 1950s, when the data is less reliable.

What is not in doubt is that if the world index carries on climbing until the end of 1997, it will have earned for sure the accolade of being the longest global bull market of the post-war period.

But it will still not be the most dramatic bull market we have known. The cumulative real return since 1990 - just over 80 per cent

still lags that recorded in the market booms of the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s (134 per cent and 302 per cent respectively). Just as interesting is the fact that, while the 1987 crash is still etched in most investors' minds as the worst setback in recent memory, hindsight places it as more of a concentrated correction to a previously overheated market than a climactic break with the long-term trend.

Dr Nairn is careful to point out that history provides no guarantee to the future, at least in any mechanistic sense. But for anyone who believes that markets are rational in the long run (as Templeton and many other so-called value investors do), the implication has to be that a bear market will arrive in due course - and probably sooner rather than later, if the length of the current bull phase is anything to go by. We just don't know when. A gloomy prospect? Not necessarily.

Anyone who has a strong balance sheet and sufficient spare funds to pick up the bargains that the bear market will inevitably throw up should be well placed to benefit from it. Doing just that was how Sir John Templeton made his millions in a 40 year investment career.

After the windfall, where do we save?

Clifford German reports on a tempting campaign

Nationwide, the largest building society still committed to remaining a mutual society, has chosen the week when millions of members of the Halifax are counting their windfall share bonuses to remind them of what they will be giving up if they stay with their benefactors once they have become banks.

Just to remind them, the Nationwide is opening a free helpline for anyone with a building society account to remind them what rate they are getting on their savings and what they could be getting elsewhere. The helpline will connect callers to a real person who will help to identify precisely what account the caller holds with which society, whether it is a postal account or a telephone account, instant access or notice account, and will then check the current rate for the balance the caller holds, and then compare it with the best rate Nationwide offers for an identical account.

This is partly a labour of love because research by NOP shows that although 73 per cent of savers with money in a building society say the rate of interest they get is important to them, 82 per cent of all investors do not actually know what that rate of interest is. Some 36 per cent never check what rate they are getting and another 28 per cent admit to checking once a year or less.

The helpline is specially targeted at younger (and busier?) savers and at women, because the research shows that only 7 per cent of individuals aged between 35 and 44 know exactly what interest they are getting compared with 26 per cent of over-65s, while only 10 per cent of women know compared with 24 per cent of men. Make of that what you will.

But there is a cutting edge to the campaign as well. It is targeted at tempting savers away from the big building societies as soon as they have handed over their share allocations. Most of the societies converting to banks are able to pay poor rates to savers who are obliged to keep their money on deposit to qualify for shares, and dare not take their money away, however poor the current return.



Once the free shares have been handed over, converting societies will be obliged to generate profits for their shareholders by charging higher rates on mortgages and paying lower rates on savings, but savers will be free to move their money, and substantial sums could shift.

Nationwide claims that the interest it pays on its own accounts is on average 0.75 per cent higher than most of its main high street competitors across a range of key products.

The comparisons are based on the top 30 financial institutions, a definition which includes the London and Scottish-based clearing banks, the six or eight building societies which have already converted or been taken over and those which are preparing to do so. It does not necessarily include the

smaller surviving local building societies who are still committed mutuals and will also tend to pay higher rates on a number of accounts, including Tassas.

"Millions are missing out on our better rates," says Philip Williamson, the Nationwide's marketing and commercial director.

"We are particularly hoping to reach investors with converting building societies, many of whom have been locked in accounts which pay less than competitive rates of interest for two years or more while they make sure of qualifying for free shares."

"As customers become free to move their savings, we are encouraging them to take the Nationwide Savings Challenge and improve the rates they earn."

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*Based on a healthy male, non-smoker, aged 30 next birthday. The cost of cover will depend on age, sex and smoking status.

#Source: Micropal. Based on a UK savings account for investments of £2,500 and over. 10 years to 2.9%.

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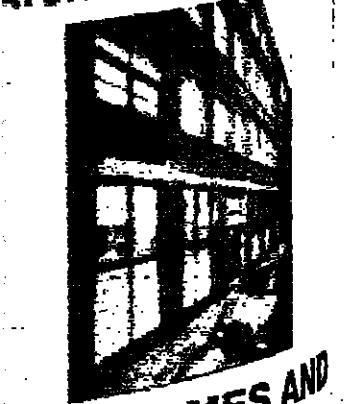
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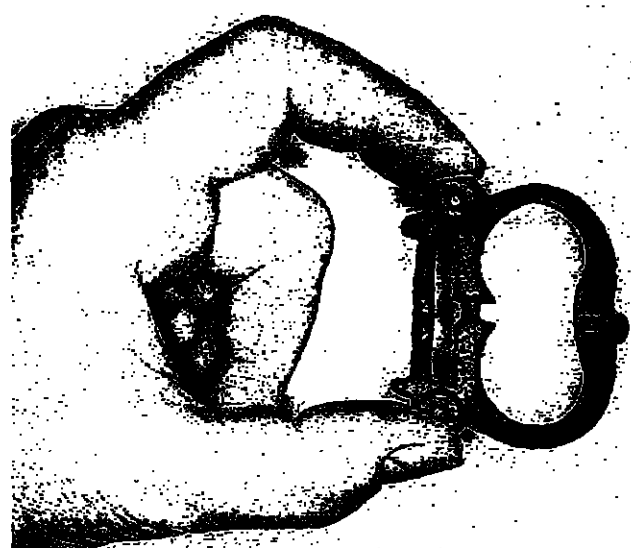
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Old and decorative but very cheap

Collect to invest: Buckles unearthed by metal detectors are worth picking up, says John Windsor



A knight's sword belt buckle, 1400-1450, worth about £20

A new antique: can there be such a thing? Decorative metal buckles – very old but very cheap – are the latest collectable. A mere 50p will buy you one dating as far back as 1250.

Tens of thousands of them, lost in fields and rivers by nobles and peasants down the centuries, are being unearthed by metal detector enthusiasts. With the exception of old coins, they are now the commonest find worth collecting.

The 50p example might be a circular copper alloy buckle, perhaps from a yeoman's shoe, still with its iron wire pin, the size of a modern 5p piece. For £5-£10 you could make up a set of half a dozen buckles from

shoes, sword belts, hats, cravats or horse harness, showing changing styles from medieval times to about 1800. After that date buckles became plain and functional, no longer fashion accessories.

Antique dealer Nigel Mills, who trades in the Monday morning market at London's Covent Garden, says: "Buckles are fascinating – the one piece of wealth that everybody has owned since early medieval times. They were made to last, to be passed down the generations, so even many of those lost in medieval times can still be worn."

The first guide book on buckles has just been published. Its author is Ross Whitehead, a 31-year-old metal detectorist and carpenter with a first class degree in archaeology, who lives in Torbay, Devon. Hitherto, drawings of buckles in history books, even histories of costume, have tended to be vague, because so little was known about them. Now historians and collectors can browse through his book's 785 photographs and illustrations documenting for the first time style changes spanning eight centuries.

Mr Whitehead says: "Compared with buckles, old coins are impersonal. The thrill of digging up a 600-year-old buckle in a ploughed field is that it is a tangible link with the person who last wore it, all those centuries ago. Coins are not intrinsically more valuable than buckles but they are comparatively expensive because so many people collect them."

"A Georgian silver buckle, although perhaps worth £50-£60 to a silver specialist, can still be picked up for a fiver or so in a flea market because so few general dealers realise what they are. For a very small outlay you can make a collection of bargains from the Middle Ages."

In Mr Whitehead's book, each of the 785 specimens, many from his own collection, has been priced by Mr Mills. The commonest prices – for complete, undamaged buckles with patinated surface and pin

intact – are 50p, £1 and £2. For a few pounds more, you could buy the sort of ornate buckle that the chivalrous medieval upper classes favoured for spurs and sword belts. Priced at £22, a 7cm long brass buckle with engraved scallop-shaped frame dated 1250-1400.

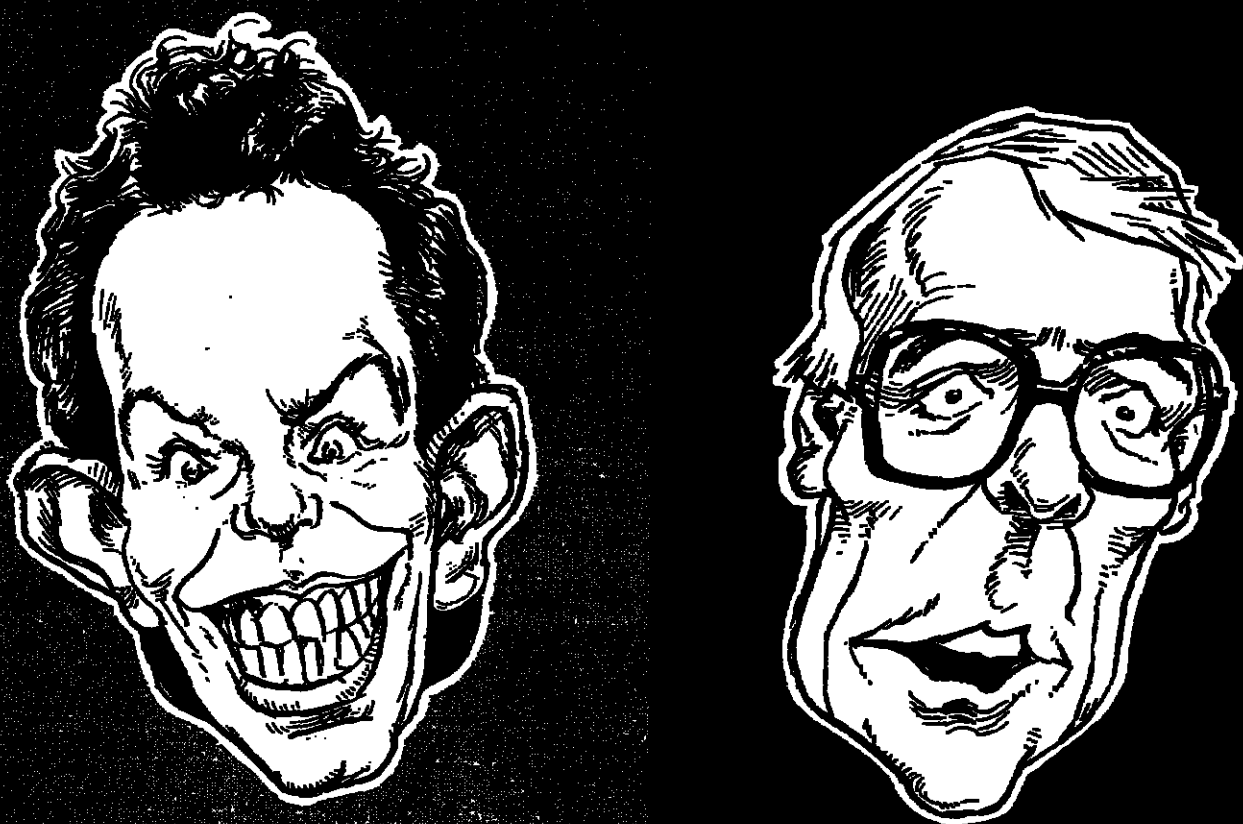
Shoe buckles are the most plentiful sort of buckle, dating from the restoration of Charles II in 1660. The newly liberated aristocracy made a fashion of big, elaborate ones. By Georgian times, the nob about town was wearing huge rectangular shoe buckles such as the 1733-1790s 6.5cm wide cast pewter specimen priced £25 in the book, in raised openwork with four delicate

semi-circles and six oval panels with beaded edges.

If you think that sounds expensive, consider the high price of new buckles in Birmingham, which by the latter part of the 18th century was turning out an annual 2.5 million alloy buckles – at a hefty 2s 6d (12½p each). That is anything from £10-£20 each in today's money – not so different from the £20 you might pay today for a well-preserved specimen.

Nigel Mills (0181-504 2569). "Buckles 1250-1800" by Ross Whitehead, £10 (inc. p&p) from Greenlight Publishing, The Publishing House, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 2HF.

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loose change

Sun Life of Canada is offering readers a free copy of its Guide to Self-Assessment, which contains easy-to-understand answers to the questions raised by tax self-assessment. It is also offering clients a telephone-based service which converts tax details into a tax return and a computation of tax due. It costs £75 plus VAT for a single person, £99 plus VAT for a married couple and is available to employed people and pensioners resident in the UK, but not to the self-employed, expats or Lloyd's underwriters!

ScotLife Home Loans with Birmingham & Midlands is offering a discount of 4.24 per cent on the standard variable rate (currently xxx per cent) fixed until the end of January next year, and a 1 per cent discount for the

following 12 months. It also pays £330 towards legal fees and the survey fee is refunded when the mortgage takes effect.

General Accident Life and West Bromwich Building Society are offering a 3 per cent discount to the current variable rate of 7.25 per cent for the first 12 months plus a 3 per cent cashback up to a maximum of £3,000. Life assurance may be necessary but there is no arrangement fee, and loans up to 90 per cent of valuation are available. Early redemption penalty is 6 per cent in the first six years and one month's interest thereafter.

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Clifford German offers advice on cashing in on the building societies' bonanza

One is simply to sell them at the best available price in the first few days of dealing, to take advantage of the pent-up

But there is a catch. Investors still are only

But for one reason or another it might be difficult to channel them into a unit-linked or a tracker fund. So far only M&G has offered to accept building society shares direct into a general PEP. Another possi-

Anyone interested in getting a free guide giving further details which will be distributed in mid-February can ring 0800 800008.

*Source: Mircopol FT-SE 100® index gross total return to 25th November 1996. Direct Line Unit Trusts Limited markets only its own products and is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMMO. Direct Line does not offer investment advice. The price of units and the income from them may go down as well as up, and you may not get back all the money you invest. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. Tax assumptions may be subject to future statutory change and the value of tax savings and eligibility to invest in a PEP will depend on individual circumstances. The minimum monthly investment is £30, Exit fee is 5.5%. For your added security all telephone calls will be recorded and randomly monitored. 'Direct Line' and the red telephone on wheels are trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc and are used with the company's permission. Direct Line Unit Trusts Limited, PEP Dept., PO Box 992, London EC4R 9EP.



fear of finance

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, says the old proverb, and a million policyholders in Scottish Amicable will know well what it means this week. They will have to wait three to five years to get the full "benefit" from their company's decision to demutualise and become a quoted company, although it plans to abandon its mutual status in May.

The bonuses when they come will amount to less than £300 each on average, small beer compared with the hand-outs building society members are getting from demutualisation, and they will be added to the value of current policies rather than given away in free shares. This is perhaps inevitable in view of the small size of the average bonus, which would result in too many tiny shareholdings, but it will not please policyholders who see the top 12 directors share up to £14m worth of shares and the 2,000-odd staff get an average £1,000 worth of shares.

It will not exactly make them all fat cats but it does raise the question of who owns a business. The old distinction between shareholders and the managers has been blurred in the past decade, which is fine for incentivising the top managers of public companies but is likely to look like money for old rope to policyholders in mutual companies, since the recipients are currently responsible to no-one at all for their performance.

One result of the derisory Scot Am bonuses for policyholders is that it should put a stop to any dreams carpet-baggers might have of starting small policies with several mutual insurance companies in the hope of making the 500 per cent profits which anyone who put £100 into half a dozen building societies two years ago will shortly start enjoying. It may even

discourage speculative demand for second-hand policies issued by mutual insurance companies.

More worrying is the decision to exclude 250,000 investors who hold unit-linked policies rather than with-profits policies. They will get nothing. It will cause the same sort of resentment as the building society conversions which drew a distinction between accounts that conveyed membership and accounts that did not. The distinctions may have been legally correct but they were not obvious to the unlucky account-holders who were left nursing a grievance.

Whatever the technical justification it can only add to the overriding impression of the general public that the financial services industry is a giant lottery in which the privileged insiders make money and the general public get pips in a poke.

It may well be that many of the smaller insurance companies are too small to meet the reserve requirements and still compete effectively with the big boys, and the choice for them is between demutualising to raise capital for expansion and amalgamating or being taken over. But as the Nationwide is demonstrating with all its might, mutual building societies can afford to charge their borrowers less and pay their investors more than societies which have turned into banks and need to keep shareholders happy.

Other things being equal the same will apply to insurers, and the reminder that their investments must support millionaire management and an army of shareholders before they start to work for the policyholder can only discourage the public from buying insurance-linked investments at a time when they urgently need to buy more.

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MORTGAGES					
Fixed rates					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.95 for 1 year	85	0.75% —	1st 5 yrs: 6.03% of sum repaid
Coventry BS	0800 126125	4.90 to 1/1/99	35	£250 —	To 1/1/02: 6 mths interest
Bristol & West BS	0800 119955	6.99 to 1/1/01	90	£275 —	To 31/12/01: 6 mths interest
Variable rates					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.75% for 1 year	90	— —	1st 5 yrs: 6.49% of sum repaid
Coventry BS	0800 126125	4.06% for 2 years	85	— —	1st 5 yrs: 6mths interest
West Bromwich BS	0121 525 7070	5.10% for 3 years	75	— 1% adv rebated	1st 6 yrs: 6% of advance
First time buyers fixed rates					
Lambeth BS	0800 225221	5.20 to 1/3/99	95	295 —	1st 5 yrs: 6 mths interest
Bristol & West BS	0800 119955	6.49 to 1/1/00	90	£275 —	To 31/12/01: 6 mths interest
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.49 to 1/3/02	95	£395 —	1st 6 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
First time buyers variable rates					
Principality BS	01222 344188	2.50 to 1/4/98	90	— —	To 1/4/02: discount reclaimed
Greenwich BS	0181 858 8212	4.19% for 2 years	95	— —	1st 5 yrs: discount reclaimed
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	5.74% to 1/3/02	95	£295 Refund val fee	1st 7 yrs: 5% of sum repaid
PERSONAL LOANS					
Telephone	APR %	Max LTV	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)		
Unsecured					
			With insurance	Without insurance	
Northern Rock BS	0345 421421	12.9H	£112.66	£102.59	
Royal B of Scotland	0800 121125	14.0	£114.78	£101.45	
Nationwide BS	via local branch	14.9	£113.15	£102.49	
Secured (second charge)					
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	7.8	Neg	£3K - £15K	
Royal B of Scotland	0131 523 7023	9.0	70%	£2.5K-£100K	
Midland Bank	0800 494999	10.1	90%	£5K-neg	
OVERSEAS					
Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	APR	Unauthorised % pm	APR
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.84	10.5	21.8
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	22.0
Bank of Scotland	0800 805805	Direct Cheque	—	11.0	26.5

Telephone	Card Type	Min Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee	Int. free period
STANDARD						
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	—	0.64N	7.90N	nil
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	—	0.79N	9.90N	56 days
Capital One Bank	0800 669000	Visa	—	0.797N	9.90N	54 days
GOLD CARDS						
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.50	10.50	46 days
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	£20,000	0.79N	9.90N	56 days
Royal Bank of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05N	14.50N	46 days
STORE CARDS						
Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods				
		% pm	APR	% pm	APR	
John Lewis	via store	1.39	18.0	1.39	18.0	
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.87	24.8	1.97	26.3	
Sears	via store	1.94	25.9	2.20	29.8	

Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	APR	Unauthorised % pm	APR
STANDARD					
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.84	10.5	21.8
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	22.0
Bank of Scotland	0800 805805	Direct Cheque	—	11.0	26.5

APR Annualised percentage rate. B+C Buildings and Contents insurance LTV Loan to value ASU Accident, sickness and unemployment E Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 25 years. H-Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged. I Introductory rate for a limited period.

All rates subject to change without notice.

Source: MONEYFACTS 01682 500677

16 January 1997

Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
INSTANT ACCESS					
Portman BS	01202 282444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.70 Year
Bank of Scotland	0500 804804	Instant Access Savings	Instant	£5,000	5.13 Month
Bank of Scotland	0500 804804	Instant Access Savings	Instant	£10,000	5.60 Month
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Instant	£50,000	5.75 Year
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Teachers' BS	01202 887171	Bullion	Postal	£500	4.80 1/2 Year
Scarborough BS	0800 590578	Instant by Post	Postal	£1,000	6.00 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 590500	Select Instant	Postal	£5,000	6.25 Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.35 Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Chelsea BS	0800 132351	POST-tel 20	20 day P	£5,000	6.05 Year
Cheltenham & Gloucester	0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day P	£25,000	6.30 Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Select 60	60 day P	£10,000	6.50 Year
Leeds & Holbeck BS	0113 225 7777	Postal Bonus	30/4/98 P	£10,000	7.00 Maturity
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Kleinwort Benson	0800 317477	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.20 Month
Investec Bank (UK)	0171 626 0879	HICA 5000	Instant	£5,000	5.25 Month
Halifax BS	01422 335333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.25 Quarter
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.50 Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 391497	Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£500	6.75F Maturity
Prudential Banking	0800 000222	Fixed Rate Savings	16 Month	£10,000	7.05F Maturity
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 391487	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£10,000	7.10F Year
Coventry BS	0345 665522	Fixed Rate Bond	30/11/99	£1,000	7.30F Year
FIRST TESSAS					
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£8,575	7.50F Year
NatWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F Year
Investec Bank (UK)	0171 626 0879	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.20 Year
West Bromwich BS	0990 143668	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£250	7.00 Year
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Sun Banking Corporation	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.50F Year
NatWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F Year
National Counties BS	01372 747771	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.20 Year
West Bromwich BS	0990 143668	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£250	7.00 Year
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (GIBs)					
Financial Assurance	0181 380388		1 year	£5,000	5.30FN Year
Pinnacle Insurance	0181 207 9007		2 years	£3,000	5.90FN Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380388		3 years	£3,000	5.95FN Year
Pinnacle Insurance	0181 207 -007		4 years	£20,000	6.30FN Year
Pinnacle Insurance	0181 207 -007		5 years	£3,000	6.40FN Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (NSAs)					
Investment Accounts			1 month	£20	4.75 Year
Income Bonds			3 months	£500	5.25 Year
First Option Bonds			12 months	£25,000	5.50 Year
Pensioners' Guaranteed Income Bond			5 years	£100	6.65F Maturity
NS Certificates (tax-free)			5 year	£100	5.35F Maturity
Children's Bond			5 year	£25	6.75F Maturity

P past only F fixed rate N net rate A All withdrawals subject to 30 day loss of interest. All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01682 500677. 16 January 1997

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M&G will be launching a new Investment Trust in February which will be available for investment in the M&G PEP.

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*Estimated total yield is 6.6% per annum at 21.97. Estimated income yield is 6.6% per annum at 21.97. Income payments will be made on 30th April and 31st October. All references to taxation are to UK taxation and are based on the Society's understanding of UK law and current practice. The value of the investment and the income from it may change and their value will depend on your own financial circumstances. The value of the investment and the income from it may change and their value will depend on your own financial circumstances. PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT NECESSARILY A GUIDE TO FUTURE PERFORMANCE.

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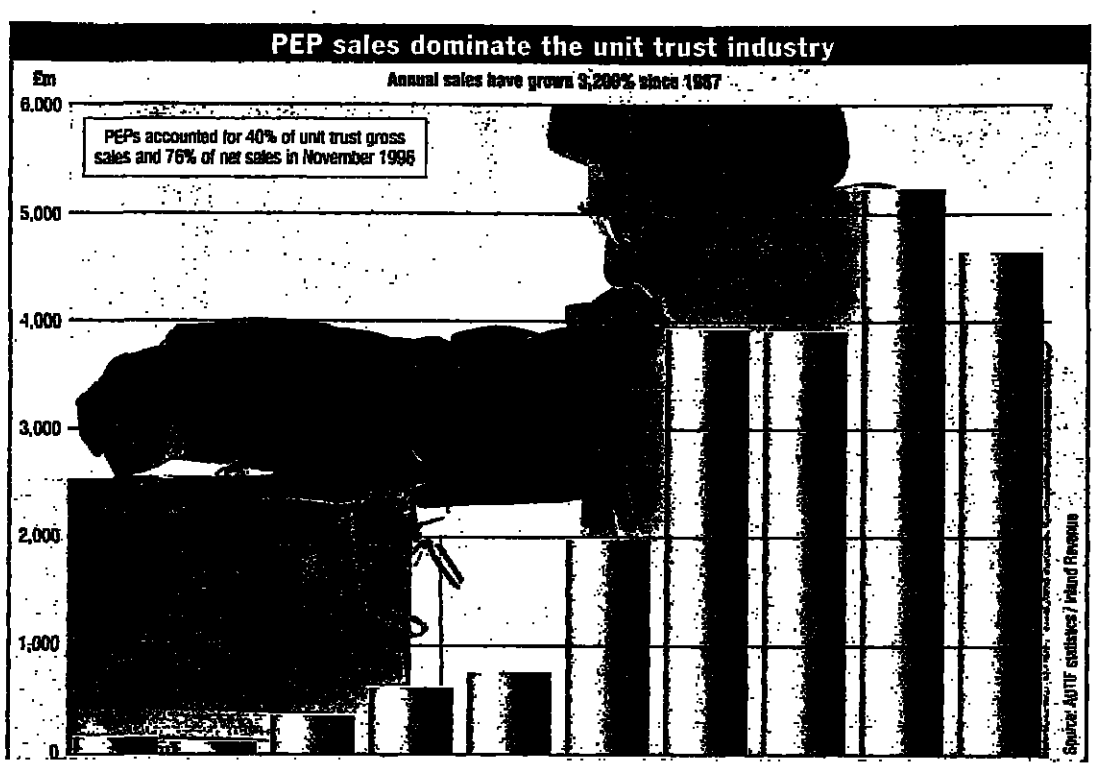
PEP providers are playing on election fears. Clifford German reports

Purchases of personal equity plans in the current tax year are set to break all records, and the demand could continue over into the 1997-98 tax year which starts on April 6, as investors rush to get money invested early in case a change of government brings a tightening of the annual allowances.

Investors had already bought almost £5bn worth of personal equity plans by the end of November with four full months of the current tax year still to come, compared with £5.25m in the whole of 1995-96. In most years two-thirds of the annual sales are concentrated in the last few months of the tax year and this year the sales season looks like being very busy, and it may well spill over into the start of the 1997-98 tax year, just in case Labour wins the election and Gordon Brown the probable Labour Chancellor puts a limit on PEP holdings in the interim budget Labour has promised within four weeks of winning an election.

Over the last 10 years a total of £24bn has been invested. Individuals who have contributed the maximum allowed each year could each now have sheltered up to £64,000 in a PEP and the most successful plans will now contain shares worth over £200,000 with tax-free income as well.

The worst a Labour Chancellor is expected to do is put an overall limit on the amount of money an individual has put into PEPs and perhaps TESSAs since they were introduced. Annual investment allowances for smaller investors are unlikely to change, but PEP providers are competing for business and will play on fears of a tougher control.



The most obvious attempt to play on investors' fears came this week from Legal & General whose Election PEP goes on sale next Monday until February 21. It is run as a Dublin-based company which qualifies it as a single company as well as a general PEP so investors can put in the maximum annual allowance of £9,000, including if they wish transfers from PEPS managed by other providers, which are accepted free of charge.

The plan charges an initial fee of 3.5 per cent and a management charge of 1 per cent a year, but the returns are calculated on the full sum put into the fund. The plan pays back the capital in full after five years, plus 1.4 times any gain in the FTSE 100 share index over that time. So 50 per cent rise would turn into a 70 per cent gain.

But it is not an equity fund and it pays no dividends. Roughly 70 per cent of the investment is simply put on deposit where it should earn the managers enough to repay the investment at maturity. The balance is used to buy options on the performance of the FTSE 100 share index which should meet the growth target.

In order to minimise the risk of investing ahead of a steep fall in the index after the election and maturing in the middle of a downturn in the market in 2002 the value of the investment is averaged over the first year and the maturity value over the whole of the five year.

This means the investor will get only four years potential growth for his money and critics claim investors will probably do better to invest in

a growth fund or even an index-tracking fund which should earn in excess of 30 per cent gross income over five years.

Perpetual is offering next month a World Income PEP fund which will deduct management charges from capital and aims to pay a gross yield of 4 per cent. Schroder is offering an Income Option PEP and a Growth Option split between three Schroder unit trusts, the smaller, companies, European growth funds. Prudential is offering a High Income version of the Prudence Gold PEP which will aim to yield 7.5 per cent tax free by investing in corporate bonds, government stocks and up to 20 per cent in shares.

Prolife is offering a triple choice of an income plan currently yielding 7.52 per cent tax-free, a capital growth plan and a combined plan. The initial charges are 3 per cent and the annual charge 1 per cent, which is less than the average for most managed funds.

At the other end of the scale Fidelity Investments believes the last thing investors want is more choice. With 1,700 PEPS to choose from already investors want simpler plans, lower charges and a better understanding of the risks and rewards of investments like PEPS, which can go down as well as up in value.

It is spending £2m on marketing including 40 free seminars across the country (Call 0800-371318 for local details) and refunding initial charges on 1997-98 PEPS for investors who invest or transfer in their 1996-97 and 1997-98 PEP allowances.

Questions and answers

Independent adviser Bryan Fisher answers a reader's query on the pros and cons of a personal equity plan.

Q: I am considering making two PEP investments of £6,000 for myself and my wife. I am adventurous and she is cautious. Which is the best PEP for us? What are the risks? There seem to be so many PEPs available, I find it all very confusing.

B.J. Manchester

good investment performance considerably outweighs these factors. The best performing PEPs have tripled in value over the last five years. This is equal to a compound return of 24 per cent per annum.

As a cautious investor, your wife might be interested in a corporate bond PEP. These are investments in fixed-interest securities, though the capital value can still vary, going down when interest rates rise and vice versa. The ultimate security of a guaranteed return of around 7 per cent can be achieved through a permanent interest-bearing PEP.

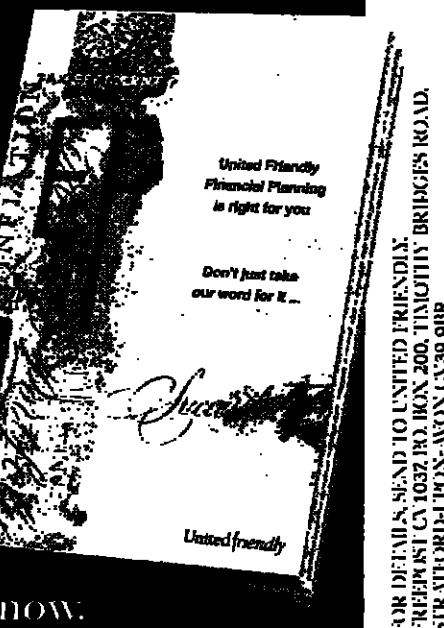
As a more adventurous investor, you can choose from the special situation sector, with or without a proportion world wide. The optimum solution would be the best track record from the growth sector with minimum volatility and charges.

Your choice in investment will depend on your individual definition of caution and adventure. The best solution is to talk to an adviser who has the facilities to monitor the investment performance, volatility, and charges of the whole range of PEPs available.

Bryan Fisher is financial planning manager at Berkeley Financial Planning in Coventry. The advice is for guidance only and no action should be taken without receiving specific and professional advice. Readers can write to him c/o The Independent, no more than 250 words, please.

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Comparing investment funds

FEATURE	UNIT TRUSTS	OEICs	INVESTMENT TRUSTS
Nature of Fund	Fund expands and contracts on demand (open ended)	Fund expands and contracts on demand (open ended)	Fixed number of shares in issue (closed ended)
Investor's Holdings	Units	Shares	Shares
Regulation	Manager and trustee authorised by IFMD, unit trust authorised by SIB, marketing regulated by FIA	Manager (ACD) and depositary authorised by IFMD, Oeic authorised by SIB, marketing regulated by FIA	Registered under the Companies Act subject to Stock Exchange Listing rules and Inland Revenue approval
Investment Restrictions	Clearly defined rules on what investments manager may make	Clearly defined rules on what investments the manager may make	Almost unlimited investments allowed subject to approval of the board
Borrowing Powers	Limited ability to borrow (up to 10% of the fund)	Limited ability to borrow (up to 10% of the fund)	Extensive abilities to borrow
Compensation	Covered by the Investors Compensation Scheme if intermediary/manager/trustee collapsed	Covered by the Investors Compensation Scheme if intermediary/manager/depositary collapsed	Covered by the Investors Compensation Scheme if intermediary/manager collapsed
Price System	Dual price	Single price	Dual price: different buy and sell prices
Frequency valuation	Normally daily	Normally daily	Normally once a month
Price Calculation	Reflects precise value of investments in fund (net asset value) + charges calculated within spread	Reflects precise value of investments in fund (net asset value) with charges shown separately	Reflects value of investments in fund but may vary according to market sentiment and charges are shown separately
Tax Advantages	Exempt from CGT within fund	Exempt from CGT within fund	Exempt from CGT within fund
Purchase/Sale	Via unit trust manager, company salesman, financial adviser or stockbroker	Via Oeic's manager, company salesman, financial adviser or stockbroker	Via stockbroker, or financial adviser or investment trust manager direct (for PEPs or regular savings plans)

A new investment is born

The unit trust business is set for a shake-up, says Ken Welsby

The price war in the unit trust and PEP business is expected to take a new turn in the coming months with the arrival of a new type of managed fund known as the Oeic. An Oeic (pronounced "oik") is an open-ended investment company, a structure which is well established in continental Europe, but new to most UK investors. Like its cousins the unit trust and the investment trust, an Oeic can be held tax-free in a personal equity plan.

Government regulations to allow Oeics came into force earlier this month, but it could be a month or more before the first funds are launched. So what's in a name? In the case of the Oeic, it tells you quite a lot about the product. First, the fund is open-ended, which means that – like a unit trust

– it can take in as much money as investors are prepared to subscribe. This contrasts with closed-end funds, such as investment trusts, where subscriptions are limited to the amount of share capital.

An Oeic is an investment company, so it is controlled by a director or directors rather than trustees, and it can – but usually won't – be quoted on the stock market. Your investment in an Oeic therefore consists of shares, rather than units. The next new feature is that an Oeic will be an umbrella fund, with several sub funds, each with its own distinctive flavour.

This could mean, for example, that someone investing £100 a month could put £50 in a conventional UK growth and income fund, £25 in emerging markets and £25 in corporate

bonds. Then, at year end, you could switch all or part of your holdings into whichever fund held out the best growth prospects for the future. The charge for switching would probably be either nominal or entirely free, since it would enable the fund manager to keep your business rather than losing it to a competitor.

This contrasts with the way that unit trusts operate, where you have to sell and re-invest, incurring charges on both sides of the transaction. Much of the spade work for the introduction of Oeics has been the work of Antif, the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds and a key role in the project was played by its director of legal and fiscal affairs, Sheila Nicoll. "The umbrella structure is one of the most important features of the Oeic

since it enables an investment vehicle to be tailored to meet the investor's specific objectives," she says.

This emphasis of flexibility is reflected in another big difference between unit trusts and Oeics: the new funds will be able to have different classes of share, each with its own specific conditions and charging structure. The different share classes can even be denominated in different currencies. To UK investors accustomed to straightforward investment in equities or unit trusts, the concept of share classes might seem an unnecessary complication – but as Sheila Nicoll explains, it's all part of the Oeic's wide appeal.

"The fund must issue public shares, available to everyone who completes the paperwork and pays the subscription," she says. "Beyond that, it's up to the fund manager to create the share classes for specific needs. For example, there could be a specific class of share for sale to PEP investors, or to institutions dealing in millions, or maybe one sold only through IFAs which paid commission."

"All these are possible, and no doubt there will be many more; it will be a matter of what's appropriate for each segment of the market."

Which brings us to perhaps the most obvious difference between unit trusts and Oeics – the price at which they are bought and sold. Look at the prices of most unit trusts, and there is a spread between the sell and buy prices – often known as bid and offer prices – at which the fund sells units to new investors and buys them back from those withdrawing their cash.

In other words, when you buy or sell units you are paying more or getting less than the net asset value (NAV) – the value of the assets held in the fund divided by the number of units issued. In contrast, Oeics will be both sold and bought at the net asset value. The commission and charges will be shown separately – according to a published price list. This transparency of pricing – in which customers can see immediately how much is being invested and how much they are paying for service – is one of the key principles of the Oeic.

Ms Nicoll says simply that investors often do not understand the dual pricing of unit trusts, and the move to single pricing and transparency will simply bring Britain in line with the rest of the world.

particularly the rest of Europe. And therein lies one of the reasons why Oeics are being introduced. Not simply to give savers more choice, but to give the fund management industry in the UK a product which they can sell easily in other European markets.

The first moves towards cross-border selling of investment products were taken in the 1980s when the European directive on collective investments – known as the UCITS directive – introduced the concept of a "passport" for managed funds. The idea is that once a fund has been approved in one EU member state it can be sold in the rest of the Union without requiring approval from other national governments.

But because unit trusts are not familiar to continental investors, there has until now been little scope for UK products to be exported to the rest of Europe. The expertise of fund management has remained in London and Edinburgh, but what has been exported is the administrative work, which accounts for 60 per cent of management costs and a similar share of the employment. Most of this has gone to Dublin and Luxembourg, where the legal frameworks for open-ended funds are well established.

Over the past five years the assets of UK fund managers in Luxembourg and Dublin have climbed from \$3.3bn to almost \$20bn, and since the late 1980s funds under management in these centres have increased fourfold, while those in London have only doubled. But the arrival of the Oeic does not just open mainland Europe to UK products, it also opens our doors to others – not just funds from continental Europe, but also some of the large US asset managers who may now prefer to operate from London rather than Dublin.

The f's are still being dotted and the t's being crossed, so don't expect to see any of these new funds being launched next week. But over the next two years industry analysts expect that as many as 300 existing unit trusts will probably convert into Oeics – taking advantage of a concession in the Finance Bill which exempts such conversions from tax and stamp duty until 1999. The first conversions will probably be trusts whose management has changed hands. But don't worry if it happens to your unit – the underlying assets will not be affected.

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The big picture

L'Avventura

Sat 11.50pm BBC2

The 1959 film which marks the beginning of the high period of Michelangelo Antonioni (above), also saw the start of the Italian director's muse-like relationship with actress Monica Vitti. It is also where the landscape first begins to dominate his characters, as a group of friends, yachting off the coast of Sicily, lose one of their number. Subtle, visually stunning and something totally new – it was newly described by one critic as "upper-class neo-realism". Just so.

Television preview

Recommended viewing this weekend
by Gerard Gilbert

To judge from the portentous opening music, you'd think that *The Place of the Dead* (Sat 9pm) was about something of great public import, instead of a British Army "adventure training" expedition to the jungles of Borneo that nearly went pear-shaped. You might remember this news story from 1994 – how half an expedition to a remote valley in Borneo nearly perished after getting left behind with insufficient rations.

Written by Jeff Pope, LWT's Head of Factual Drama, *The Place of the Dead* is part of a growing British fascination with a genre which the Americans have been mining for decades – the behind-the-headlines drama (captioned yachtsman Tony Bullimore is alleged to be holding offers from Hollywood as I write). The story is framed around an army enquiry into the incident, which allows Timothy West, as the officer in charge of said enquiry, to butt into the action from time to time with remarks like "It seems to me that this conversation between Mayfield and Neil was crucial". Pay attention at the back, in other words. This is just as well, since otherwise the viewer might drift off into

a comfortable torpor, enjoying the Malaysian scenery but largely disinterested in the human drama unfolding within it. As with LWT's film about the SAS mission inside Gulf War Iraq, *The One That Got Away*, events are based on one team member's accounts – and the air is thick with the smell of threatened legal action from colleagues less sympathetically portrayed.

Also based on a real story, albeit from the 1970s, *Texas Justice* (Sat BBC1) is more involving in a glib, often laughable, post-*Dallas* sort of way. However, it started last night so I won't waste too much space on it, suffice to say that fans of *NYPD Blue*'s Dennis Franz can catch their hero playing a shyster lawyer.

To tie in with his first film in nearly 15 years, *Arena* (Sat BBC2) has a portrait of Michelangelo Antonioni, subtitled "Dear Antonioni" after an open letter to the Italian director (who, after a stroke, can no longer speak) from Roland Barthes. Taking up the tone of Barthes's letter, Gianni Massironi's film errs on the side of the hagiographic, ignoring the fact that one or two major film critics are utterly turned off by Antonioni's work. Still, it's a useful overview of his

oeuvre, from his early neo-realist-tinged Italian features to his current release, via *Blow Up*, *Zabriskie Point* and that exploding house. Which tale of youthful alienation brings us handily to *People's Century* (Sun BBC1), which, this week, deals with the mass juvenile revolt that culminated in the events of 1968 – a time when, according to one of our reminiscents, "the best way to seduce a girl is to talk about Trotsky or revolution". New Lads in 1968 dressed like Che Guevara.

Meanwhile, the latest entry in BBC2's recent fine tradition of instant history lessons, *The Great Sell Off* (Sun BBC2), charts the story of privatisation under the current Conservative regime. Except that "privatisation" existed neither in word nor manifesto intent at either the 1979 or 1983 general elections, and was, as in so much of politics, the result of a make-do policy – that of off-loading government shares to raise cash. Even old Labour sold BP shares in the 1970s. It was the Falklands factor which changed all that – and a wild-eyed Maggie who, having launched the fleet, decided that she could launch the biggest single share flotation ever – British Telecom. Rejoice.



The big match

Five Nations Championship

Scotland v Wales

Sat 2.25pm BBC1

The new Five Nations rugby union championship kicks off today (at 3pm) with one of the most even-looking competitions in years, thanks to England's relatively unsettled team. The match at Murrayfield should prove educational. Scotland nearly took the grand slam last year and with Craig Chalmers (above), could well surprise us again. Wales, with their rugby league returnees Quinlan, Gibbs, Bateman, Young and Davies, are the competition's dark horses.

Saturday television and radio

BBC 1

- 7.05 *The Pink Panther Show* (R) (7391499).
- 7.25 *News and Weather* (3778505).
- 7.30 *Children's BBC: Ignogood*. 7.40 *Speed Racer*. 8.05 *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest*. 8.30 *The New Adventures of Superman*.
- 9.15 *Live and Kicking*. *Blue Peter's* Tim Vincent, Cliff Richard, Cyndi Lauper and the Backstreet Boys are the guests (S) (20784321).
- 12.12 *Weather* (7816654).
- 12.15 *Grandstand*. 12.20 *Football Focus*. 1.00 *News*. 1.05 *Racing from Haydock*: the 1.15 race. 1.25 *Tennis: Australian Open*. 1.40 *Racing*: the 1.45 Peter Marsh Steeplechase. 1.55 *Rugby Union*: preview of today's Five Nations matches. 2.10 *Racing*: the 2.15 Totepool Long Distance Hurdle. 2.25 *Rugby Union*: Live coverage of Scotland v Wales from Murrayfield in the Five Nations championship. The kick-off is at 3pm. See *The big match*, above. 4.40 *Final Score*. 5.00 *Rugby Union*: highlights of Ireland v France from Dublin (S) (21940418).
- 5.30 *News and Weather* (352296).
- 5.40 *Regional News and Weather* (590895).
- 5.45 *The Simpsons*. This episode takes its cue from that long-running American news story of a few years back when a boy got stuck down a well, as Bart makes a bogus radio announcement that a little boy called Timmy is stuck down a well in Springfield (S) (630493).
- 6.10 *Due South*. Fraser is held hostage on a runaway train by a gang of homicidal terrorists in the Canadian Mountie-in-Chicago saga that hasn't really captured the public's imagination (857963).
- 6.55 *Noel's House Party*. One-woman fitness industry Rosemary Conley receives a Gotcha (S) (632741).
- 7.50 *The National Lottery*. Last week's show was a bit flat. Can't add, camp draw-master Dale Winton who's up like Uncle Bob (S) (385505).
- 8.05 *Casualty*. Following on from last week's storyline – the staff are interrogated when Charlie is accused of sexual harassment. Meanwhile, an escaped prisoner causes chaos on the ward (S) (757876).
- 8.55 *News and Sport* (Followed by *Weather*) (234692).
- 9.14 *National Lottery Update* (776789).
- 9.15 *Tearing Peter Strauss*. Heather Locklear and Dennis Franz. See *Preview*, above (419944).
- 10.45 *Match of the Day*. Liverpool v Aston Villa at Anfield is the main event (S) (8501760).
- 11.50 *The Frank Skinner Show* (R) (S) (985383).
- 12.20 *Top of the Pops* (R) (S) (9228258).
- 12.50 *Border Shootout* (Chris McIntyre 1990 US). The rare thing (thank heavens, you say) – the modern Western. This one, intriguingly, is written by Elmore Leonard, a writer better known for laconic, streetwise thrillers like *Get Shorty*. It stars Cody Glenn as a young deputy sheriff struggling to keep control in his boss's absence (9870600).
- 2.20 *Weather* (1666426). To 2.25am.

BBC 2

- 7.05 *The Locked Room* (John Brahman 1946 US). The first film in a Robert Mitchum double-bill finds Bob bewitched by unlikely temptress Laraine Day in a psycho-drama containing more flashbacks than a Vietnam veteran on LSD (1745031).
- 8.30 *Bandido* (Richard Fleischer 1956 US). Robert Mitchum again – this time as a gun-runner caught up in the Mexican Revolution (41673).
- 10.00 *Chanelle* (S) (3311609).
- 10.35 *Network East* (S) (6371586).
- 11.20 *Q Asia* (S) (9147429).
- 11.50 *Film 97 with Barry Norman* (5858012).
- 12.20 *Escape to Burma* (Allan Dwan 1955 US). Torrid stuff as falsely accused innocent-on-the-run Robert Ryan ends up hiding out on spiced Barbara Stanwyck's Burmese tea plantation. They fight, they kiss (1680944).
- 1.45 *House of Bamboo* (Samuel Fuller 1955 US). Robert Ryan again, this time as an undercover American agent who is sent to infiltrate a crime gang operating in occupied Japan and believed to be led by errant GIs. Typically in yer-face direction from Fuller, who revels in the seedy, frontier setting, and Ryan is well cast in the morally ambiguous lead role (90839234).
- 3.25 *The Proud Ones* (Robert D Webb 1956 US). The Robert Ryan triple-bill concludes with a so-so western enlivened by the presence of Walter Brennan and Virginia Mayo (6891050).
- 4.55 *Top 12* (S) (6380050).
- 5.40 *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Michael Curtiz, William Keighley 1938 US). Errol Flynn at his swashbuckling best in this happy, Technicolor romp around Hollywood's Sherwood Forest. Cheerful, self-mocking and beautifully cast, with Olivia de Havilland as Maid Marian, Claude Rains as Prince John, Alan Hale as Little John and Basil Rathbone as Guy of Gisborne (17259708).
- 7.20 *What the Papers Say*. With Jonathan Cooper of the *Daily Mirror* (Then *Weather*) (S) (314857).
- 7.30 *News and Sport*, *Weather* (109012).
- 7.45 *Big Time*. *Scrutiny* reporter Dinah Lammiman follows the Government's Home Affairs Select Committee as it visits prisons in this country and America, and ponders the future of the British prison service (180465).
- 8.25 *Tennis*. Sue Barker introduces highlights from the Australian Open in Melbourne (228944).
- 9.00 *TBI Death Us Do Part*. The Garnetts on holiday in an episode from 1972, co-starring Spike Milligan as "man on train" (R) (2321).
- 9.30 *Secrets of Lost Empires*. Structural engineer Mark Whitty's attempt to discover how Stonehenge was erected (R) (S) (729079).
- 10.20 *Arena: Dear Antonioni*. See *Preview*, above (6125811).
- 11.50 *L'Avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni 1959). See *The big picture*, above. Followed by *Weather* (91705692). To 2.15am.
- REGIONS. Wales: 4.55pm *Dad's Army*. 5.30 *Wales on Saturday*. 5.50 *Film: The Adventures of Robin Hood*.

ITV/London

- 6.00 *GMTV*: 6.00 *News*. 6.10 *Mole in the Hole*. 6.30 *Professor Bubble*. 6.50 *Bug Alert*. 7.10 *Disney's Wake Up in the Wild*. 8.20 *Gargoyles*. 8.55 *Masked Rider* (1697505).
- 9.25 *Scratchy and Co.* Dean Gaffney, aka Robbie from *EastEnders*, drops by for a chat, and there's music from Suede and fictional boy band, The One (S) (6872767).
- 11.30 *The Chart Show* (S) (91499).
- 12.30 *The Making of Star Trek: First Contact*. Extensive movie plug (R) (82673).
- 1.00 *News*, *Weather* (96209321).
- 1.05 *Local News*, *Weather* (96209321).
- 1.10 *Ant & Dec's Night Night*. The *Hunters* (Ant & Dec) (S) (96209321).
- 1.15 *Ant & Dec's Night Night*. The *Hunters* (Ant & Dec) (S) (96209321).
- 2.50 *SeaQuest* DSV. They all live in a futuristic submarine (S) (19683857).
- 4.45 *News and Results* (Followed by *Weather*) (1455789).
- 5.05 *London Weekend Tonight* (1343321).
- 5.20 *Clueless*. Pretty crummy spin-off from *Army* Heckerling's gorgeous comedy about style-obsessed Beverly Hills teenagers (1703586).
- 5.50 *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. Similar in tone to the above, Sabrina is furious at being labelled a geek (S) (855708).
- 6.15 *Gladiators*. The Ashes. New series. Great Britain face off against Australia in this three-part tournament (S) (644383).
- 7.15 *Blind Date* (Followed by *National Lottery Result*) (S) (673895).
- 8.15 *Family Fortunes* (S) (503302).
- 8.45 *News and National Lottery Update* (Followed by *Weather*) (216296).
- 8.59 *Local Weather* (797012).
- 9.00 *The Place of the Dead*. See *Preview*, above (S) (6012).
- 11.00 *The Good Policeman* (Peter Werner 1994 US). Ron Silver plays that clichéd creature, the unorthodox but determined New York police commissioner, determined to fight crime whatever the price. Tony Lo Bianco and LA star Blair Brown help out (910470).
- 12.35 *In Bed with Meddler*. Bob Mills tells his way through the TV out-takes (7747616).
- 1.05 *Brotherhood of the Gun* (Vern Gillum 1991 US). Western starring Brian Bloom as a Civil War hero who abandons a life of crime after a bungled train heist and opts to sample life on the other side of the law. Jamie Rose and David Caradine star (Followed by *News Headlines*) (S) (338906).
- 2.45 *American Gladiators* (S) (4096722).
- 3.35 *Club Nation*. Recent events in the club and dance-music scene (R) (3726987).
- 4.25 *TV Sport Classics* (R) (17794277).
- 4.55 *Coach* (S) (33669345).
- 5.05 *Coach* (S) (33669345).
- 5.30 *News* (63074). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

- 6.00 *Sesame Street* (R) (22963).
- 7.00 *Dumb and Dumber* (38437).
- 7.30 *Dennis* (R) (753470).
- 7.45 *First Edition* (7598925).
- 8.00 *Trans World Sport* (S) (87963).
- 9.00 *The Morning Line* (S) (54050).
- 10.00 *Gazzetta Football Italia* (13128).
- 11.00 *Bizlet Superpower preview* (S) (26692).
- 12.00 *Land of the Pharaohs* (Howard Hawks 1955 US). William Faulkner, of all people, provided the dialogue for this plodding historical epic that has paragon Jack Hawkins planning to build a giant pyramid, but reckoning without his scheming wife, Joan Collins. James Robertson Justice is in there somewhere, trying to look Egyptian (S) (328147).
- 1.55 *Racing from Kempton Park*. Brough Scott introduces the 2.10 Shepperton Handicap Hurdle, 2.40 Lanzarote Handicap Hurdle, 3.10 Fulwell Handicap Chase and the 3.40 Twickenham Novices Chase (S) (61077147).
- 4.05 *The Morehouse Men*. Repeat *Witness* film about the exclusively black Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, whose former pupils include Martin Luther King and Spike Lee (R) (5513012).
- 5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (S) (4699760).
- 6.30 *Right to Reply* (S) (321).
- 7.00 *A Week in Politics* (S) (5147).
- 8.00 *Fragile Kingdoms*. Those over-exposed felines, the "killer cats" – cheetahs, jaguars, lions, tigers – open this new series of wildlife films (4895).
- 9.00 *The Frigate Heart*. 3/3. Maybe Channel 4 thought we didn't get the message of Paula Milne's heart-surgeon drama first time round – which is unlikely since it won't be on its sleeve. Perhaps they're just keeping it fresh in people's memories for *Batla*. An unusually swift repeat, in any case. Nigel Hawthorne stars (R) (S) (4833789).
- 10.20 *Jackie* (David Jones 1988 US). Simple and effective three-hander doesn't quite leave its stage origins behind, but Robert De Niro's terrific performance makes up for that. He plays a Vietnam veteran who looks up his semi-alcoholic former wartime buddy (Ed Harris) and his quiet, schoolteacher sister, Kathy Baker. Romance and therapy ensue (S) (248505).
- 12.15 *TV Pizzu*. What surely has to be one of the easier gigs – trawling through American TV for the wacky and downright mad. This week, Laura Kightlinger meets Barbara Eden of *I Dream of Jeannie* immortality (S) (6953180).
- 1.00 *The Girlie Show* (R) (S) (2322971).
- 1.35 *Ricki Lake*. People who are in on-off relationships (R) (S) (7698744).
- 2.15 *Beavis and Butt-Head* (R) (81068).
- 2.45 *Bless This House* (R) (S) (4543180).
- 3.10 *Film Night* (R) (S) (32688277).
- 3.40 *The White Room*. With Oasis, rap duo Definition of Sound and Joan Osborne (R) (S) (121971).
- 4.40 *The Beat Specials* (S) (2484971). To 5.00am.

ITV/Regions

- ANGlia. As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (82673). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (1259437). 2.00 *Ant & Dec's Night Night* (1734050). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (2247470). 3.50 *Baywatch* (7048676). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1243321). 12.35am *Film: This Gun for Hire* (9594616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).
- CHAMPS. As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (82673). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (1259437). 2.00 *Ant & Dec's Night Night* (1734050). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (2247470). 3.50 *Baywatch* (7048676). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1243321). 12.35am *Film: This Gun for Hire* (9594616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).
- CENTRAL. As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (82673). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (1259437). 2.00 *Ant & Dec's Night Night* (1734050). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (2247470). 3.50 *Baywatch* (7048676). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1243321). 12.35am *Film: This Gun for Hire* (9594616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).
- ITV. As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (82673). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (1259437). 2.00 *Ant & Dec's Night Night* (1734050). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (2247470). 3.50 *Baywatch* (7048676). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1243321). 12.35am *Film: This Gun for Hire* (9594616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).
- MERIDIAN. As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (82673). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (1259437). 2.00 *Ant & Dec's Night Night* (1734050). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (2247470). 3.50 *Baywatch* (7048676). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1243321). 12.35am *Film: This Gun for Hire* (9594616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).
- WESTCOUNTRY. As London except: 12.30pm *Movies*, Games and Videos (82673). 1.10 *Cartoon Time* (1259437). 2.00 *Ant & Dec's Night Night* (1734050). 2.55 *seaQuest DSV* (2247470). 3.50 *Baywatch* (7048676). 5.05 *Anglia News and Sport* (1243321). 12.35am *Film: This Gun for Hire* (9594616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).
- S4C. As C4 except: 6.00am *Sesame Street* (22963). 10.00 *Board Squad* (10311). 10.30 *New Gamesmaster* (62321). 12.00 *Mockewatch* (53679). 12.30 *Blackadder* (4722079). 12.55 *Six Steps to Heaven* (8345929). 1.55 *Right: Pancam* (Pancam) (S) (6745616). 2.05am *Cartoon Knowledge* (5916242). 3.05am *Film: The Man in the Road* (7932971). 4.30-5.30am *Funkin' Bunker* (33548).

Radio

Radio 1
(97.5-98.9MHz FM)
7.00am Kevin Greening 10.00
Dave Pearce 1.00 Jo Whaley 4.00
John Peel 7.00 Danny Dingo
9.00 *Road Show* 12.00 *Reggae*
Dancehall Night 2.00 *Essential*
Mix 4.00-7.00am Charlie Jordan

Radio 2
(88-90.9MHz FM)
6.00am *Mojo* 8.05 Brian
Matthew 10.00 Steve Wright 1.00
Jeremy Clarkson's *Laughing Gear*.
See *Choice*, above. 1.30 Smith
and Jones Sound On 2.00 *Judi*
Spies 4.00 *Nick Barracough* 5.00
Reading Music 6.00 *The Beautiful*
Singer in Concert 7.00 *The Ella*
Fitzgerald Songbook 7.30 *Messrs*
Gilbert, Sullivan and Bruce 9.30
David Jacobs 10.00 *The Arts*
Programme 12.05 *Charles Nowe* 4.00-
7.00am Mo Dutta

Radio 3
(90-92.4MHz FM)
6.55am *Weather*, *News*, *Headlines*.
7.00 *Record Review*.
9.00 *Building a Library*. Michael
Oliver compares available
recordings of Shostakovich's
Symphony No. 5.
10.15 *Record Release*.
11.15 *Reissues*.
12.00 *Private Passions*. Michael
Berkeley talks to the celebrated
conductor Sir Colin Davis
about his favourite musical
moments.
1.00 *News*, *Threads*. (3/6).
1.20 *Vintage Years: The Philhar-*
monia. Humphrey Burton
traces the history of the Phil-
harmonia Orchestra.
3.20 *The Finishing Touch*. Andrew
Watkinson, leader of the Endel-
en Quartet, offers advice to the
Miro Quartet from the Royal
Academy of Music on how to
perform Beethoven's *String Quar-*
tet in A. Op 18 No 5. (4/6).
4.00 *Lutoslawski: Music for*
Strings (Breaking Chains). Live
from St Giles, Croydon. The
Guldborg String Ensemble.
Brindley Quartet. Lutoslawski:
Overture for Strings; Five Folk
Melodies; *String Quartet*.
Preludes and Fugue.
5.30 *Jazz Record Requests*.
6.15 *Musical Moments*.
7.00 *Cherubini*. Massenet's three-
act comic opera, in a per-
formance given at the Royal
Opera House, Covent Garden,
introduced by James Naughtie.
Cast includes Elizabeth Futral,
soprano (L'Enseignante), Alison
Hagley, soprano (Nina), Nicole



Choice

Classic car-based sketches
presented by the BBC's resident
motormouth in *Jeremy Clarkson's*
Laughing Gear (1pm R2, left) – the
word you're looking for is "aargh".
Tonight's opera is Massenet's *Figaro*
spin-off *Cherubini* (7pm R3),
conducted by John Eliot Gardiner,
live from Covent Garden, and with
Susan Graham in the title role.

6.50 *Prayer for the Day*.
7.00 *Torley*.
9.00 *Sport on 4*.
9.05 *Sport on 4*.
10.00 *Loose Ends*.
11.00 *The Week in Westminster*.
11.30 *From Our Own Correspondent*.
12.00 *Money Box*.
12.25 *Just a Minute*.
12.55 *Weather*.
1.00 *News*.
1.10 *Any Questions?* Jonathan
Dimbleby's guests are Finan-
cial Secretary to the Treasury
Michael Jack MP, Green Party
representative Peg Alexander,
and Bethup of Leicester the Rt
Rev Dr Tom Butler.
1.55 *Shipping Forecast*.
2.00 *Any Answers*.
2.30 *Playhouse: The Silk Worm*.
40 years ago the United Na-
tions recognised the principle
of an independent Cyprus, but
it took three years for the
British to relinquish control.
This drama by Maria Vigar tells
the story of a young Scottish
journalist who becomes in-
volved with the Cyprus free-
dom fighters. With David
Bannerman and Frank Kovacs.
4.00 *Prefabulous*.
4.30 *Science Now*.
5.00 *Consequences*. Denny
Baker considers the far-
reaching impact of the 1981
Brixton riots.
5.40 *Footnotes*.
5.55 *Weather*.
6.00 *Six O'Clock News*.
6.25 *Week Ending*. Topical com-
edy sketch show.
6.50 *The Week Cafe*. (4/5).
7.20 *Kaleidoscope Feature*. Paul
Allen talks to young theatre di-
rector Katie Mitchell about her
acclaimed productions of
Shakespeare, Beckett, Ibsen
and Euripides, and her latest
venture as director of the Strat-
ford Chamber Theatre, a pro-
duction of the English Mystery
Plays for the RSC.

7.50 *On These Days*.
8.50 *Day Night Theatre*.
Wild Hops. By Sally Worbey.
With only two weeks remaining
of the 1999 hop-picking sea-
son, Jack and Laura decide
they must resolve their marital
crises. With George Jones and
Elle Haddington. (3/4).
9.35 *Classics with Kay*.
9.50 *Ten to Ten*.
10.00 *News*.
10.15 *Volcano*. Drama by Peter
Wolf in which a mill-owner's
wife in Victorian England em-
barks on a desperate mission
to climb a volcanic mountain
in New Zealand. With Juliet
Stevenson.
11.15 *The Blue Room*.
11.45 *Aesthete's Foot*.
12.00 *News*.
12.30 *The Late Story: The Frozen*
O'Donovans. By Michael Carson.
12.48 *Shipping Forecast*.
1.00-6.00am *As World Service*.

Radio 5
(630.5MHz FM)
6.05am *Dirty Talk* 6.30 *Brian*
Hayes at Breakfast 9.05 *Weekend*
11.05 *Top Gear* 11.35 *The*
Game 12.00 *Gardening Round-*
up 12.05 *Baker and Kelly*
Uplift 1.05 *Sport on Five*
6.05 *St-O-Six* 8.05 *The Treatment*
9.05 *Dailyn UK* 10.05 *Bruf*
Lives 10.35 *World Up!* 11.00
Night Extra 12.05 *After Hours*
2.00 *All Night* 5.00-6.05am
Morning Reports

Classic FM
(107.9-109.3MHz FM)
6.00am *Sarah Lucas* 9.00 *Count-*
down 12.00 *Gardening Round-*
up 12.05 *Baker and Kelly*
Uplift 1.05 *Sport on Five*
6.05 *St-O-Six* 8.05 *The Treatment*
9.05 *Dailyn UK* 10.05 *Bruf*
Lives 10.35 *World Up!* 11.00
Night Extra 12.05 *After Hours*
2.00 *All Night* 5.00-6.05am
Morning Reports

Virgin Radio
(102.5-107.9MHz FM)
6.00am *Jane Le Gace* 10.00 *Je-*
rry Peel 11.00 *Mark Forster* 12.00
Erin Padden 1.00 *Robin Banks*
2.00-6.00am *Howard Pearce*

Satellite

SKY 1
7.00am *WKRP in Cincinnati* (43383).
7.30 *George* (62418). 8.00 *Young In-*
dians (1215105). 9.00 *The In-*
vincible (1987) (1520708).
10.00 *Quantum Leap* (51302). 10.00
Star Trek: The Next Generation (76296).
10.00 *Quantum Leap* (51302). 10.00
Star Trek: The Next Generation (76296).
10.00 *Quantum Leap* (51302). 10.00
Star Trek: The Next Generation (76296).
10.00 *Quantum Leap* (51302). 10.00

The big match
Five Nations Championship
Scotland v Wales
Sat 2.25pm BBC1

The new Five Nations...
Scotland v Wales...
BBC1

ITV/Regions

As London except 12.50pm
As London except 12.50pm
As London except 12.50pm

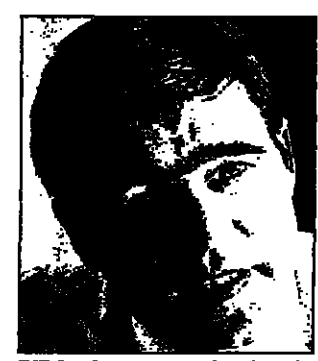


March of sorrow: Indian women among tens of thousands of workers who paraded through Bombay yesterday to show respect for Datta Samant, a trade union leader assassinated by four gunmen

S Korea threatens to expel union mission

Richard Lloyd Parry
Seoul

An international trade union mission led by the former head of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Bill Jordan, has been threatened with possible deportation from South Korea next week, raising fears of a diplomatic rift between Seoul and European governments.



Bill Jordan: Determined to do his job and give advice

Mr Jordan will arrive in Seoul on Monday, accompanied by nine fellow delegates of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), to express support for South Korean unionists who are striking in protest at a recently passed labour law. On Thursday, a more junior four-man ICFTU mission left Seoul after being threatened with expulsion for speaking out in support of the strikers. Diplomats in Seoul fear that any action taken against Mr Jordan's delegation

speeches, press conferences or "activities disturbing public peace and order" will not be tolerated. "Immigration officers will explain our laws to the new visitors on their arrival in view of the illegal activities by the [previous delegation of] four foreign union leaders," Yu Byong Rhang, director-general in charge of immigration at the South Korean Justice Ministry, said yesterday. "There will first be warnings if they violate laws and, if they continue not to heed them, then they will be deported."

Members of last week's ICFTU delegation addressed huge rallies in Seoul, which has seen almost daily demonstrations since the controversial labour law was rammed through the National Assembly at a secret session on Boxing Day. The number of stoppages has gone down since Wednesday's general strike call, but yesterday a worker was seriously injured after setting himself alight, the second such incident in eight days. The new legislation abolishes workers' legal protection against lay offs, and delays the legalisation of unofficial unions. Four leaders of the illegal Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), an ICFTU affiliate, have been arrested.

Seoul argues that the new law will increase Korean competitiveness. But it is regarded in some Western capitals as a betrayal of promises to liberalise union law made by Korea when it joined the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) last December.

Both the content of the legislation and the way in which it was passed raise deep concerns for the democratic process and are a disturbing throw back to the era of military rule in Korea, the ICFTU said in a statement. "I won't do anything that will make resolution of the situation more difficult," Mr Jordan, the ICFTU's secretary general said last night. "But I have to do my job. Our affiliated [members] in Korea pay me to represent them at the international level and give advice in their country."

Foreign embassies in Seoul have expressed their concerns about the consequences of any legal action against the delegates. One Western diplomat said: "If they behave reasonably and are deported, it's the kind of thing on which foreign governments would have to speak out."

Labour law draws roar of rage from Asian Tiger

Richard Lloyd Parry

As South Korea enters its fourth week of labour uproar, with self-immolations, arrests of unionists, and strikes and riots, it is worth asking a straightforward question: given the apparent vigour of the country's economy and its remarkable growth since the Korean War, what is all the fuss about?

In with the new, out with the old

Comparison of old and new South Korean labour laws

Old Law	New Law
Political activities	
Prohibited	Permitted as long as it is not the union's primary objective.
Redundancy	
Strict limits on employer's right to fire workers	Employers can lay off workers in case of business downturn, technological changes, and restructuring.
Working hours	
Little flexibility	Flexible work schedules allowed. Working hours can be extended up to 56 hours a week as long as average hours do not exceed 44.
Third-party intervention	
Separate unions may not strike in one another's support. Employers may not bring in substitute workers during strikes.	Third-party support in strikes and substitute workers permitted.
Union recognition	
Official unions only, limited to individual work places. No multiple trade unions.	Workers can freely form and join trade unions - from the year 2000.

Official predictions for growth next year are 6 per cent, almost one point lower than the year before, but still enviable by European or American standards. In the decade up to 1995, wages in Korea increased fivefold. Unemployment also rose recently, but to a mere 2.4 per cent, a fraction of that of Germany. Do South Korea's trade unionists have a genuine grievance, or are they simply clinging to old-fashioned privileges long been abandoned by their Western comrades?

The law whose revision has raised such tumult in Seoul was an anachronistic institution, curiously out of keeping with South Korea's present status as a global manufacturing power. It was originally drafted in 1953, and, despite subsequent revisions, reflected the needs of a much poorer nation struggling to pull itself together in the aftermath of the Korean War.

Its most startling clauses, from a contemporary Western point of view, were the limitations it placed on an employer's right to lay off workers. Like Japan, Korea has a tradition of lifetime employment. For a firm to sack its employees has been seen as not only as an act of economic hardship, but as a betrayal of the nurturing, paternalistic role which the company is expected to play in the life of its workforce.

Companies were not able to reduce workforces because of slack demand or financial hardship. Apart from specific cases, such as gross incompetence or criminality, it was almost impossible for them to impose redundancies.

In case of strikes, firms were forbidden from bringing in outside labour, and there were limitations on the amount of flexibility in working hours which they could legally expect from their employees.

In the 1950s this served to deflect the burden of social security from an impoverished government on to industry. But the cosy arrangement has increasingly become a burden that Korean companies cannot afford, now that they are competing not only with Western competitors but with the fast-growing, low-wage economies of China and South-East Asia.

Under the new law, the old safety nets have been cut away. Like their Western counterparts, Korean workers can now be made redundant on grounds of bad business, changes in company structure, technological innovation, and because of the need to increase productivity. Non-union strike break-

ers can be brought in. Working hours can be extended to 56 hours a week as long as they average no more 44 hours, and employers can demand greater flexibility in shift arrangements. The unions will make certain gains from the new law. Gone is the former bar on union political activity and contributions (although a union will be banned "if its primary objective lies in political or social activities"). In the past, unions were limited to one per company. But eventually employees will be able to organise across industries and professions, and come out in support of their comrades in other unions.

The problem is that while the bosses will win their new privileges as soon as the new law comes into force on 1 March this year, the unions will have to wait. To avoid "unnecessary confusion", in the government's phrase, free, multiple trade unions will not be allowed to function for another three years. Until the year 2000 only the old, official unions will be recognised. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), which represents 500,000 workers, will remain technically illegal, and its leaders will be vulnerable to prosecution for "interfering with business activities".

The manner in which the new law was passed, at a secret session of the National Assembly, attended only by members of the ruling party, has convinced union leaders that the law is part of a concerted attempt to marginalise them. Many acknowledge that change was inevitable but that without the right to organise freely and legally, they feel uncomfortably exposed to the harsh weather of the international free market.

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obituaries / gazette

Professor Geoffrey Gee

With synthetic polymers (plastics and rubbers) pervading many aspects of modern life, it can be difficult to think back to the 1930s when these "artificial" materials were largely confined to a few resins, such as Bakelite, and regenerated cellulose fibres, such as rayon.

Geoffrey Gee acted in many ways as a guardian of British polymer science, both in smoothing the interaction of Government with industry and academia, and in expanding and safeguarding polymer research in British universities. That polymer chemistry forms part of an honourable course in chemistry owes much to his influence.

Gee started research at a time when there was still a reluctance to believe that "real" molecules could have molecular weights of 100,000 or more. Starting in 1938, he undertook a comprehensive study of polymer solutions, which removed any doubt about the nature of these new materials. His definition of cohesive energy density as a determinant of solubility gained lasting acceptance. Many years later Gee co-operated with the physicist S.F. Edwards and the chemist G. Allen in initiating the studies which have brought us to a substantial understanding of the properties of polymer fluids.

Gee came from a rural background, his father being a blacksmith serving the farming communities of New Mills and Disley, in Cheshire. The Wesleyan Chapel was the foundation of a sincere religious belief

which influenced the whole of his life. He was introduced to chemistry at New Mill Secondary School, and went on to read Chemistry at Manchester in 1928. His introduction to research was in colloid science (the science of small particles in suspension) at Manchester under D.C. Henry, after which he transferred to Cambridge in 1933, financed by ICI Dyesuffs, to work with Eric Rideal, in a stimulating group which included H.W. Melville, R.M. Barrer and A.S.C. Lawrence. His connection with ICI inclined his work towards polymers, and eventually led to his appointment at the British Rubber Producers Research Association (BRPRA) in 1938.

The policy of the board of BRPRA was simply defined – to understand rubber through a programme of fundamental research. In addition to work on polymer solutions, studies by Gee's team of elastic behaviour under various types of deformation, and of the kinetics of oxidative and photo-oxidative degradation of hydrocarbons, produced results of lasting value.

His appointment as Director of Research of BRPRA in 1947 took him away from the laboratory bench and into administration, although he still found time for a "paper and pencil study" of molten sulphur which anticipated a continuing interest in ring-chain equilibria. This was a time when natural rubber was meeting for the first time the challenge from synthetics, and Gee's achievement was to formulate technical specifications which placed the natural material securely in the family of elastomers, allowing a greater understanding of it in relation to synthetic materials.

In 1953 Gee took up the Chair of Physical Chemistry in Manchester. Within a year he became head of department, a position he occupied for the next 20 years. Here he built up a research group in the physical chemistry of polymers; the group continues to the present day as one of the largest and most active in the UK.

As Dean of the Faculty of Sci-

ence from 1963 to 1965, Gee played a part in the creation of the Department of Liberal Studies in Science. A brief stay in Midland, Michigan, sponsored by the Dow Chemical Company, gave him a chance for uninterrupted research, which was not to recur until his retirement in 1977: in 1966 he was appointed Pro-Vice Chancellor, from which followed a continuing involvement with the foundation and administration of the new John Rylands University Library, the Regional Computing Centre, and the increasingly important University Development Committee.

Gee contributed widely to public and scientific life. Soon after arriving in Manchester he was invited to serve as chairman of the Materials Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Supply, and to lay the ground-work for future liaison between ministry laboratories and universities. He was President of the Faraday Society in 1969-70, and a founding editor of *Polymer*, which became a leading international journal of research.

All his life Gee was an active worker in the Methodist Church, reflecting a steadfast faith untroubled by his scientific insight. He took a particular interest in the relationship between science and religion, and in retirement took a major share in the writing of *God of Science, God of Faith* (1988).

Colin Price and Colin Booth

Geoffrey Gee, chemist: born Disley, Cheshire 6 June 1910; research chemist, ICI (Dyesuffs Group) 1933-38; research chemist, British Rubber Producers Research Association 1938-47; Director of Research 1947-53; FRS 1951; Professor of Physical Chemistry, Manchester University 1953-1973; Sir Samuel Hall Professor of Chemistry 1955-1977 (Emeritus); Pro-Vice Chancellor 1966-68, 1972-77; CBE 1958; Chairman Joint Services Materials Advisory Committee 1953-58; President, Faraday Society 1969-70; married 1934 Marion Bowden (one son, two daughters); died Cheshire Hulme 13 December 1996.



Bluff and hearty: Mills opening a bus shelter at Birmingham International Airport

Photograph: News Team

Iain Mills

Elected a Conservative MP at his first attempt in 1979, Iain Mills was a robust defender of the interests of his constituents in Meriden, which takes in parts of Solihull and Birmingham Airport. He loved England and especially Meriden, and was often in the forefront of campaigns warning against incursions into the surrounding green belt. He was cautious about European developments.

A behind-the-scenes man, Mills seldom claimed the limelight and that was true of his important work on the Committee of the House of Commons, where he served diligently on backbench, standing and select committees on such subjects as employment, transport safety, Community trademarks and European legislation. Often he was in the chair, having

been appointed by the Speaker as a member of the Speaker's panel of chairmen. A crucial ingredient of his work on committees – and most certainly why he was appointed – was that he was trusted and respected by all parties represented on them. Born in Hillhead, Glasgow, in 1940, the son of an accountant and company director, he grew up in what was then Rhodesia – now Zimbabwe – and was educated at Prince Edward's School in Salisbury, and at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, where he read Chemical Engineering. In 1961 he began his service with Dunlop in Rhodesia, spending three years as a tyre designer, before moving to England as Marketing Planning Manager and the designer in charge of Dunlop's racing tyre development –

where he was involved in the detail, and excitement, of Grand Prix racing. He made an important input into the design of the tyres on which Jackie Stewart won the world motor racing title in 1969, 1971 and 1973. Mills's specialisms in Parliament, within a wide and eclectic range of interests, were the motor industry (he co-chaired the All Party Motor Industry Group) and what are rather clumsily known as intellectual property matters: copyright, patents, counterfeiting. He worked tirelessly to try to get the European Patents Office sited in London, rather than Munich, and in wider ways to stop the penetration of European markets by unsatisfactory and substandard imitation products and components. He was also a keen campaigner for animal rights,

and on one occasion tried to ban goldfish as fairground prizes. His parliamentary work was preceded in politics by assiduous local government service in Staffordshire and in particular in Lichfield, where he served on the district council from 1974 to 1976. He was a bluff and hearty man and a careful friend. He liked a drink and a joke with his friends when his relentless daily schedule was done.

Before settling down to the crucial committee burden, which he accepted cheerfully, he had been Parliamentary Private Secretary to Norman Tebbit (1981-87). They worked well together. But ministerial office did not come Mills's way and this may have been a disappointment.

When I became his next-door neighbour as the MP for the other half of the borough of

Solihull he immediately suggested we ignore the convention about not being seen about in another Member's constituency without that Member's consent and I readily agreed. He was an easy and considerate man to work with.

John M. Taylor

Iain Campbell Mills, politician: born Glasgow 21 April 1940; MP (Conservative) for Meriden 1979-97; PPS to Minister of State for Industry 1981-82, to Secretary of State for Employment 1982-85, to Secretary of State for Trade and Industry 1985-87, to Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1985-87; Chairman, Community Trade Mark Committee 1984-97; Joint Chairman, All Party Motor Industry Group 1992-97; married 1971 Gaynor Jeffries; died London 16 January 1997.



Gee: polymer research. Photograph: Godfrey Argent

The Marquesa de Cadaval

No one who has been to an open-air concert at the Quinta da Piedade – in the misty hills above Lisbon – ever forgets the scene. The performers, accompanied by birdsong, in a verdant bower: the smartly dressed throng promenade among the statues in the rose-garden; and a tall, slim woman, leaning on her silver-tipped cane, quietly presiding. This was the Marquesa de Cadaval, throwing open her home for the annual music festival she had created. The Sintra Festival is now in its 31st year.

She affected musical history not only in Portugal but in Europe as a whole – not so much through whom she knew, but because of whom she helped, from Poulenc to Rubinstein, from Stravinsky to Daniel Barenboim. Vladimir Ashke-

nazy, who took refuge with his wife at the Marquesa's house after their precipitate flight from Soviet Russia, paid tribute to her as their "mother hen".

Olga Nicolais de Robilant, descended on one side from Catherine the Great and on the other from a long line of Venetian doges, was born in Turin in 1900. She grew up in a cultivated home where the casual guests included Verdi, d'Annunzio, Diaghilev and Nijinsky. One of her childhood friends, with whom she remained close until his death, grew up to become Pope Pius XII. Cole Porter serenaded her at a bar on the Venice Lido; Chaliapin sang for her; Ravel, with whom she later kept up a long correspondence, wrote music for her. Another childhood friend was the stepdaughter of Puccini,

who taught both girls to dance. "We loved his music," she recalled, "but with us he was very modest. He used to say, 'All my music is good for it is making housemaids cry'."

At 14, shocked by the realities of war, she joined the Red Cross as a volunteer. Her first foray into musical patronage came when, as a student of 20, she persuaded Rubinstein to give his services free for the inaugural concert of the Amici della Musica in Florence. One of her most exhilarating memories was of Rubinstein, Ravel, and Stravinsky all staying together at her house.

Her friendship with Stravinsky had a macabre ending. "When he was terminally ill," she told me, "he sent a message that he loved my house so much that he wanted to die

there. But I thought, I can't have this. If he dies in my bed, what do I do? Do I burn it? I certainly couldn't sleep in it afterwards. And I don't want the widow and her friend Robert Craft hanging about grieving afterwards. So I said, 'I'm sorry, I don't want him to die here. Tell him I hope he gets better.'"

He died elsewhere, and – to her relief – before her message of rejection reached him. She had acquired her house in Sintra through marrying Antonio Alvares Pereira de Melo, the exiled Marquis de Cadaval. It had been a ruin, so she rebuilt it and laid out the gardens. Remarkably widowed at 38, she decided to turn it into a musical Mecca.

When Francis Poulenc organised a performance there of his opera *Les Dialogues des*

Carmélites, it was as a thank-offering for her prayers during the Second World War, when he had been convinced – as she had been – that he would be killed. She had buoyed him up with parcels of cheese and coffee, to which he responded with parcels of sheet music. Her patronage was eminently practical. As time went by, a constant stream of young musicians passed through her doors, each given a room and *carte blanche* to spend their days as they chose. "One day," she recalled, "an impresario told me that he was going to make me a present in return for the wonderful times he had had at my house. He said, 'I'm going to send you an unknown artist, who I think you will like. Her name is Jacqueline du Pré.'"

The Marquesa did not know

her, but sent a telegram inviting her to stay. "The house was full of musicians, but she immediately became the centre of things, playing day and night, and getting cross because when she got up and was ready to play, everyone else was still asleep. A few months later she rang and said she had met someone with whom she was madly in love, and could they honeymoon in my house?" So that was where she and Daniel Barenboim spent their first married weeks.

Musical life in Portugal had been a stunted affair until the Marquesa – abetted by the Gulbenkian Foundation – erupted on to the scene. She steered a masterly course through the political rapids before, during, and after the "Carnation" revolution. For her concerts she

persuaded Salazar – a man who abominated Jews and Communists – to let her import both, and in large quantities. "I simply told him, if you want the best, you must let me have my Russians." His condition, which she happily met, was that she should lodge them in her house, and take full responsibility for their behaviour.

The revolution, she admitted to me, was a shock. "I admired Salazar very much, and am still dedicated to his memory. But – things finish!" Whereupon she shrugged, smiled, and walked off into her rose garden.

She was a woman of easy grace, completely devoid of pretension; she enjoyed good health – fortified by wine from her own vineyard – almost until the end. She died peacefully, buoyed up by her religion,



The Marquesa: "mother hen" Photograph: Michael Church

with her family and friends around her.

Michael Church

Olga Nicolais de Robilant, festival organiser: born Turin 17 January 1900; married 1926 Antonio Alvares Pereira, Marquis de Cadaval (died 1938; one daughter, and one daughter deceased); died Lisbon 21 December 1996.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

GILMOUR: On 20 November 1996, in New York, to Emma and Andrew, a son Yan, brother for Archie.

HESSION: On 15 January, to Brid and Doual, a son, Cian.

DEATHS

HARRISON: Woodthorpe Jude, aged 81, peacefully in his home, Cross Hospital on 16 January. Beloved husband of Alice and father of Ian, Sue, Nick and Sarah, and loving grandfather to their children. Funeral at Mortlake Crematorium on Friday 24 January at 10am. Donations, if wished, to Soilless Association (UK), c/o Co-operative Funeral Service, 103 King Street, London W6 0QU. Telephone: 0181-748 2982.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at 66.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at 110 a line. VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, Patron, Scottish Rugby Union, attends the Scotland v Wales International Rugby Match at Murrayfield, Edinburgh.

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am. The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Chief Emeke Anyaoku, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. 64: Mr Marshall Sir Alfred Bull. 76: Mr Robert Banks MP. 60: Mr Peter Beardsley, footballer. 36: Dr David Bellamy, biologist. 64: Sir Michael Bett, First Civil Service Commissioner. 62: Mr John Boorman, film director. 64: Mr Raymond Briggs, author and illustrator. 63: Mr David Burke, Chief Constable, North Yorks. 58: Mr John Carr, former chairman, Countryside Commission of Scotland. 70: Mr Kevin Costner, actor. 42: Mr Richard Dumas, jockey. 33: Mr Christian Fittipaldi, racing driver. 26: The Hon Sir Rocco Forte, chairman, Forte. 52: Mr Paul Freeman, actor. 34: Sir William Goodhart QC. 64: Mr David Grant, Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Durham. 75: Miss Dawn Guinness, former headmistress of Felislowe College. 51: Sir James Hann, chairman, Scottish Nuclear. 64: Sir William Harding, former diplomat. 70: Sir Robert Hicks MP. 59: Sir Terence Higgins MP, former Olympic athlete. 69: Mr John Hougham, chairman, ACAS. 60: Mr David Howell MP. 61: Mr John Hume MP. 60: Mr Edward James, former diplomat. 80: Dame Jennifer Jenkins, former chairman, the National Trust. 76: Mr Paul Keating, prime minister of Australia. 53: Mr Martin Laing, chairman, John Laing. 55: Sir Godfrey Le Queux, Judge of Courts of Appeal, Jersey and Guernsey. 73: Sir Peter Preston, former civil servant. 75: Mr Mark Rylands, artistic director, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. 37: Sir Nigel Strutt, former and landowner. 81: Sir Walter Verco, former secretary, Order of the Garter. 90: Sir Ralph Verney, former vice-Lord Lieutenant of Bucks. 82: Sir Clive Whitmore, former Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Home Office. 62: Sir Alan Whitmore, former director, Exchange and Trade Relations Dept, IMF, New York. 71.

TOMORROW: Mr Desi Arnaz Jr, actor. 44: Mr Peter Atkinson MP. 54: Miss Nina Bowden, novelist. 72: Mr Dewey Bunnell, rock singer and guitarist. 46: The Earl of Carnarvon, honorary racing manager to the Queen. 73: Sir Jonathan Clarke, former circuit judge. 67: Mr Michael Crawford, actor and singer. 55: Mr Bernard Dunstan, painter. 77: Mr Stefan Edberg, tennis player. 31: Dr Rod Evans, rock singer. 52: Mr Phil Everly, rock singer. 58: Mr Walter Goldsmith, chairman, Flying Flowers. 59: Mr William Hayden, former chairman and chief executive, Jaguar. 68: Mr Hans Hoffer, bass baritone. 83: Mr Alex Jarratt, former chairman, Smiths Industries. 73: Mr Richard Lester, film director. 65: Brigadier Helen Meechie, former Director, WRAC. 59: Mr David Newbagg, chairman, Faupel Trading Group. 67: Mr Nigel Nicolson, author. 80: Mr Robert Palmer, rock singer and guitarist. 48: Miss Dolly Parton, country music singer and actress. 51: Senator Javier Perez de Cuellar, former secretary-general of the UN. 77: Mr Bryan Pringle, actor. 62: Sir Simon Rattle, orchestral conductor. 42: Mr Charles Smith, managing director, Chevron UK. 67: Sir John Stanley MP. 55: Mr Dennis Taylor, snooker player. 48: Mr Gary Tulley MP. 47: Mr David Treddennick MP. 47: The Earl of Wemyss and March, former president, National Trust for Scotland. 85: Mrs Margaret Welford, former President of the Liberal Party and of the National Council of Women of Great Britain. 85.

Anniversaries
TODAY: Births: Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, philosopher. 1689; Peter Mark Roget, lexicographer. 1779; Charles John Keen, actor. 1811; Joseph Farwell Gilkison, inventor of a barbed wire machine. 1813; Alan Alexander Milne, author. 1882; Arthur Mitchell Ransome, writer of children's books. 1884; Oliver Norvell Hardy, comedian. 1892; Cary Grant (Archibald Alexander Leuch). actor. 1904; William Sansom, author. 1912. Deaths: Jan van Riebeeck, founder of Cape Town. 1677; Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton, first Baron Lytton, author. 1873; Joseph

Rudyard Kipling, author. 1936; Sydney Greenstreet, film actor. 1954; Hugh Todd Naylor Gaiskill, statesman. 1963; Sir Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton, designer and photographer. 1980; John Frederick, Baron Wolfenden, social reformer. 1985. On this day: Lima, capital of Peru, was founded by Pizarro. 1535: Captain Cook discovered the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). 1778: Today is the First Day of St Peter's Chair. Roman: St Desle or Deculus, St Prisca or Priscilla and St Votianus.

TOMORROW: Births: James Watt, inventor of the modern condensing steam engine. 1736; Edgar Allan Poe, author and poet. 1809; Sir Henry Bessemer, engineer. 1813; Paul Cezanne, painter. 1839. Deaths: William Congreve, playwright. 1729; Isaac D'Israeli, writer. 1848; Pierre Joseph Proudhon, journalist and socialist. 1865. On this day: King Edward III established the Order of the Garter. 1348; John Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons for seditious libel. 1764: The Duke of Wellington took Ciudad Rodrigo. 1812: the coast of Antarctica was discovered. 1848: Verdi's *A Traviata* was first performed. Rome 1853: the Japanese invaded Burma. 1942: Indira Gandhi became prime minister of India. 1966. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of Saints Abram and Audifax. St Albert of Castel. St Canute IV of Denmark. St Charles of Sezze. St Fillan or Folan. St Germanicus. St Henry of Uppsala. Saints Marius and Martha. St Mesallina. St Nathalan and St Wulfstan.

Lectures

TODAY
British Museum: George Hart, "The Temples and Tombs of Toni". 1.15pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Frances Homan. "Towards the Royal Academy: public space for art in 18th-century England". 3pm.

TOMORROW
National Portrait Gallery: Valerie Grove and Anne Harvey. "Dodie Smith 1896-1990". 3pm.

Private interests – public welfare?

faith & reason

"The Market where possible, the State where necessary," said John Smith. The Rev John Kennedy, a Methodist, thinks that the Catholic bishops have missed their target.

Three months ago the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales produced their statement, *The Common Good*. It is much the best piece of political theology to have appeared in Britain in many years. But it works better as a judgement on the past than as a guide to the future. A little mild dissent seems in order.

The bishops rightly condemn the scolding rhetoric of greed that the British have endured in recent years. They protest that there is more to life than money, and that our lives and our values have been too thoughtlessly hurtled into the marketplace. They insist that there is a common ground on which we can build a shared, moral, public life. They proclaim that in Christ God has made all humanity one flesh, and that all social relationships should be shaped accordingly.

All this is becoming familiar, and much praised. The document is drawn from the strong tradition of Catholic social teaching, and the bishops are modestly proud that these ideas have helped shape the current consensus in the European Union. But this consensus is now in trouble. *The Common Good* is surprisingly parochial in this regard; it takes almost no account of current European realities. Two examples make the point.

Just as *The Common Good* was launched, nearly half a million Belgians took to the streets of Brussels in protest against the ills of their society. Jan Kerkhofs, the eminent Belgian Jesuit, reported this "White March" in the *Tablet*. He revealed a Belgium which is cosily corporatist, relatively Catholic – and deeply corrupt. *The Common Good* implies continually that there is something specially immoral about a Britain more caught up in the toils of the marketplace than Belgium. This is unwise.

Second example. The Germans are justly proud of a society which has sustained both profitable businesses and a clath-

rate system of social belonging. Making money and doing good worked together. The German churches have created political theology around this Social Market; they have been much clearer than the Catholic bishops that the pursuit of self-interest serves the common good. Now that social order is in serious disarray, and the German churches are deeply involved in a fierce debate about Germany's future. The whole system is under great stress, but the Germans have a great advantage over us – they can't blame Margaret Thatcher.

The crisis does not arise from government imposition of market values. Nor is it just a matter of paying for the integration of the former East Germany. It arises from the sheer difficulty of maintaining in a fast-changing world.

The Common Good might well create a debate in Britain as robust as the one started by the German churches. But its attitude to the ethics of self-interest is too uncertain. The bishops refer loosely to the evils of "laissez-faire capitalism", but fail to acknowledge that British levels of public expenditure are not greatly lower than European averages. At one point they appear to accuse poor old Adam Smith

of idolatry, dogmatism and superstition. This is rather parochial; the Germans have long seen Smith as the morning star of the Social Market, who first suggested that a market economy can enhance rather than undermine social cohesion. The bishops make much of structural sin, which is fine; but they attach the idea almost wholly to the market, barely at all to the Church, nor to public bureaucracies in general.

This weakness is evident in one of the document's proclaimed strengths. It describes at length the impressive engagement of the Church in welfare provision in Britain. But Catholic involvement in commercial activity is unmentioned. There is a great crowd of Catholic entrepreneurs in my part of London who simultaneously serve their own interests and the common good. They are not adequately celebrated in this document. It is just not true that private interests harm the poor, and that welfare helps them. Poor people do better as customers of Kwik Save than as supplicants to Hackney Borough Council.

How then shall we be saved? The English and Welsh bishops might consult two Scottish Smiths. They might first reread Adam, who comes close to immolation in this document. They might also recall John Smith, who years ago insisted that a tougher world economy demands sharper attention to the moral validity of self-interest. He put this succinctly in a speech at Southwark Cathedral back then – "The Market where possible, the State where necessary."

Tony Blair's Christian Socialists may soon have the opportunity to implement this Gospel according to John. They might usefully talk to the German churches about the market – and to the Belgians about structural sin. *The Common Good* provides a fitting epitaph upon the cruelties of Thatcherism. But it is not yet an adequate moral guide to the future politics of Europe.

A meritocracy that makes a mockery of toil

Why does Chris Evans earn £5m a year? Why did Nicola Horlick earn £1m a year? Are they worth it? Are their earnings morally justifiable? These are questions that have been asked at least since the time Plato set a ratio of four-to-one between the wealth of the richest and that of the poorest citizen as the rule for his well-ordered republic. They are questions our society has largely ceased to ask itself, paradoxically in precisely the 18-year period when incomes at the top end of the scale have escalated out of all proportion to what went before.

What Mr Evans and Mrs Horlick have in common, apart from being dumped by their employers this week, is that they work in starved industries. Mr Evans, the Radio 1 disc jockey and television personality, enjoys near-universal fame – or notoriety. “Radio’s most revolting man” (*Daily Mail*), idol of rebellious youth, object of derision for sophisticated youth. Mrs Horlick, on the other hand, was a star in the closed and specialised field of pension fund management, and is now chiefly famous not just for that, but for combining it with her role as mother of five children. (Note that her husband, Tim, another City high-flier with Salomon Bros, is not known as a father-of-five “superman”.)

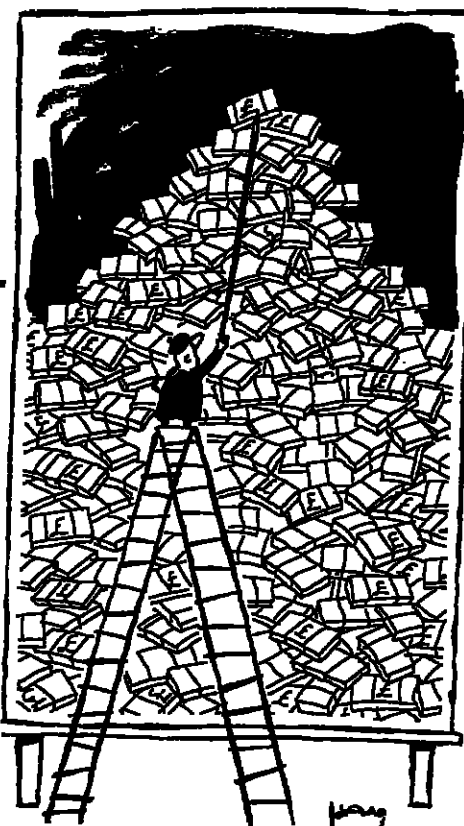
As a society, we have long made exceptions for entertainers. The star system, invented in Hollywood, was about marking certain people out as utterly different from the rest of us,

exempt from the rules that governed either our incomes or our private morality. But, as the star system has spread into a range of other activities, and has increasingly become the way rewards are allocated, it has had a distorting effect on notions of fairness.

It was not so long ago that the idea of “the rate for the job” was dominant in wage setting, not just for routine workers, but for footballers, lawyers and even newspaper columnists. Footballers would be paid by the game, lawyers by the hour and columnists by the word, on a series of fixed scales. Now all that has gone, and the rate for the job throughout the economy has largely been replaced by the language of market forces and competition. Stars in all fields are paid whatever price they can command in the market, and lesser mortals are much more aware of what their corner of the labour market will bear.

But there is a confusion here which it is worth setting aside. We believe in free markets, and we accept that Mr Evans and Mrs Horlick have been paid what their employers think they are worth. That does not make their seven-figure incomes “fair”. For one thing, their jobs have been priced in a rigged market, full of cultural and institutional obstacles to free movement. The BBC is a quasi-monopoly provider; pensions fund management is a highly specialist industry in transition.

There are, however, much larger forces in



play here. Michael Ignatieff, in his forthcoming Radio 4 series, *A View of the Century*, argues that one of the defining themes of this century is the mass aspiration to individual creativity. This may be a broad simplification, but it is an important insight. It is only in the 20th century that everyone in rich industrialised countries can aspire to self-fulfilment through their own creativity. In this American century, creativity is fame and fame is money. Young men on council estates in Manchester can hope to become rich and famous if they have a talent to entertain. Mr Evans’ success is deeply subversive of meritocracy: what is the point of paying attention in class, passing your exams and staying out of trouble if someone with a wacky sense of humour or someone who plays computer games all the time ends up earning hundreds of times as much as the respectable toiler?

Mrs Horlick’s success is different. Not only does she come from a privileged background, but she benefited from meritocracy to start with. One of the reasons why there are so many women – relatively speaking – in her field is because performance is highly transparent, and promotion is less dependent on male politics. But once you become a star in any City sector your salary is bid up exponentially because of your scarcity value. And the spread of the star system is dangerous not just to meritocracy, but to a feeling of fairness, and the value of community. Companies know that

some differences in salary are necessary and acceptable, but that excessive differences can make team-working difficult. One of the problems Mrs Horlick ran into was that the star system breaks down corporate loyalties: her alleged crime was to be planning to defect to a rival bank with 20 of her staff.

“No individual is bigger than the interests or superior performance that has been achieved for clients over the past years as a result of a concerted team effort,” said a Morgan Grenfell memo yesterday. “No one is bigger than Radio 1,” said Matthew Bannister, the station’s controller. They sound like the harsh disciplinarians of faceless bosses through the ages, but they make an important point. The breakdown of the old “rate for the job” mentality is a good thing. But we should now start being more concerned about fairness.

That is what Tony Blair appeared to be groping towards with his “stakeholder” rhetoric last year, although the word was more successful in driving people away from the subject than in stimulating argument. We know, however, that this subject has currency: John Major admitted, in one of his early clashes with the new Labour leader, that the government had a responsibility to reduce inequality. In the two years since then, he has not been asked what he meant. We hope that the question of fairness will become an election issue, and more than an election issue, during the course of this year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

European tax union is bound to follow from a single currency

Sir: Proposals to unify European tax rates (report, 16 January) should be no surprise. As a matter of economic logic, tax union is an inevitable consequence of monetary union.

Countries outside a monetary union can use exchange rates to offset their ups and downs. For example, bad-weather failure of the fruit crop would cause severe economic hardship throughout Spain. But then the peseta would fall, and it would become cheaper for people to visit Spain or buy Spanish goods, and balance would be restored.

A member of a monetary union does not have this option. It may try to revive things by taxing less and spending more, but that takes time to work and just stirs up problems for the future. No, its only real hope would be to campaign for large welfare transfers from the union.

Thus when US states suffer – from Florida’s fruit crop is ruined by frost, for example – they can do little more than petition for “federal disaster area” status, so that they qualify for federal support. Faced with hardship among the citizens of a member state, the EU authorities could hardly resist such an appeal, with EU

taxpayers footing the bill. A coherent stabilisation policy for the union would require a coherent tax policy.

In other words, a single currency implies a single welfare policy and a single tax policy. So these proposals for a single tax regime should not surprise us, and we should expect proposals for a single European welfare policy in due course.

Dr EAMONN BUTLER
Director
Adam Smith Institute
London SW1

Sir: Your headline “Now Britain faces single European tax system” (16 January) illustrates the dilemma the Government has got itself into by frustrating the development of democracy within Europe.

The Government chooses to deal through the Council of Ministers, an unelected body, strong in personalities and Franco-German interests. It has given strength to the Council of Ministers at the expense of the European Parliament and even of the European Commission. The Council, namely Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac, have performed the opposition to John Major’s

equivocations and responded by hard political manoeuvring.

A more positive approach from Britain would lead to a more democratic and a looser federal system embodying the principle of subsidiarity.

EDMUND CRITCHLEY
Blackburn, Lancashire

Sir: I received the Referendum Party circular the other day. I was struck, as I am with most Euro-sceptic addresses, by the apparently casual use of “the United Kingdom”, “this country” or “Britain” when discussing a possible distancing of ourselves from (the rest of) Europe.

Surely they cannot imagine that Scotland and Wales would follow England out? They do quite well out of Europe, and the usual threat of having their legislature in another country won’t work – they have had that situation for centuries.

Whatever one’s views on EU membership or development, it has to be assumed that saying goodbye to one union means saying goodbye to the other.

M A BARNES
Wallington, Surrey

Sir: John Redwood (article, 17 January) says: “If you share a currency with another country you have to share many other things as well.” But look at the United States.

Firms and people happily move from one US state to another to take advantage of better legal and tax conditions. One can be in a federal union with a common currency and still have a lot of control over revenue-raising and spending.

G WILLIAMS
Brussels

Sir: Will closer integration with Europe mean we get more Bank Holidays (UK eight, other EU countries nine, 10 or 11)? And if so, where would it go?

How about some time in mid-to-late January? Three weeks after the New Year, that extra holiday could be a life-saver, with dismal weather and short days, everyone has a tendency to feel depressed.

In addition, skiers would get another weekend on the piste, and Muslims might get a Bank Holiday at the end of Ramadan.

A FEMBLETON
Sheffield

Real benefit of the Lords

Sir: Vernon Bogdanor says (“Let’s root out the rot in our sickly constitution”, 8 January) that there is probably more wisdom to be found in the local pub than in the House of Lords. The Second Chamber, he claims, is “feeble” and allows “omnipotent government”.

The House of Lords is not ideal as a revising chamber and its composition needs reform. But to claim that it has no effect at all as a brake on headstrong government flies in the face of the facts.

The Conservative government has been defeated in the Lords – against the odds – 231 times since 1979. The Lords have acted as a constitutional brake.

On the Bill to abolish the Greater London Council and metropolitan counties, they prevented the Government from cancelling elections in order to replace elected councillors with nominees.

Two years ago, they frustrated Michael Howard’s plans to remove police authorities from local democratic control.

There have been real effects for real people. Divorced women will have better pension rights because of the Lords. Disabled people have wider protection against discrimination. Local authority tenants have a vote before developers set up Housing Action Trusts on estates.

School governors cannot choose their own inspectors. Pupils with special educational needs have stronger rights.

Elderly people are more likely to have been able to rent a specially adapted home.

All of us have more access to national sporting events on television without having to pay.

Last year, the Lords published a very successful report on central/local government relations, which has marked a new start in that area. The original idea came from a noted constitutionalist who argued that the Lords were ideally placed to act as a “chamber of experts”.

Why has Vernon Bogdanor changed his mind? DAMIEN WEAVER
London N1

Carey and jobless: a question of timing

Sir: Andrew Brown reports (“Bishops vote on taking a political stand”, 15 January) that a senior adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury tried to “squash” the forthcoming report on unemployment and the future of work by an ecumenical churches’ sponsoring group set up by the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland. This is completely untrue.

There have been discussions about the timing of the report’s publication and launch, now set for early April. This is entirely the responsibility of the sponsoring group, taking account of advice from various quarters. That is, however, a quite separate issue from the substance of the report itself.

LESLEY PERRY
Archbishop of Canterbury’s Secretary for Broadcasting, Press and Communications
Lambeth Palace
London SE1

Vote for Diana

Sir: We have a prime minister who won’t ban land-mines, and a princess who would – long live democracy!

DAVID KNIGHT
Penzance, Cornwall

LETTER from THE EDITOR

Two serious matters this week, both of which will have offended some readers. First, there were 20 or so letters complaining about the headline on 8 January following the Carlton monarchy debate, which highlighted the third of those who rang in registering anti-monarchy views, not the two-thirds of pro-monarchists.

Many of you suggested that it was *The Independent’s* republican bias showing through. Not so, though we do have a bias against reporting Diana and Fergie-type stories, and have both republicans and monarchists on the staff, the daily paper has not taken a position on the issue. The headline reflected the opinion that it was the size of the minority view that was surprising, even in a dodgy telephone poll. Similarly, if a surprise candidate did very well in a parliamentary by-election (“Scargill candidate wins 30 per cent”) one might highlight that, against the expected winner.

No excuses, though, on the second issue: in yesterday’s paper, our headline said, “Labour kills millennium show”. Which it certainly was doing as we went to press on that edition. But then, following late-night and small-hours-of-the-morning haggling, Labour seem to have backed off; they may not be striving officially to keep the Greenwich show alive, but nor are they killing it. The project, amended and limping, may yet go ahead after all. Colin Hughes, the deputy editor, rang me in the morning and summed the situation up fairly: “I thought it was a pretty good front page,” he said, “if you ignore the fact that the main headline was untrue.”

Well, headlines are often overtaken by events. But ... er, sorry.

Following our recent reflections on the importance of editorial independence through the general election, there was a very long editorial in *The Times* on the same subject. It promised its readers that it, too, would give “the most independent analysis” of the election ... right until a certain Australian-American makes his mind up.

returns to the countries because we are also expert at mine clearance and the design and fitting of false limbs. This means that charities and (through government agencies) Western taxpayers, are struggling to clear up after their own job-created arms exporters.

So why shouldn’t we short-circuit the whole process, saving both time and money: the next time an African war is getting underway, the leaders of leading mine-exporting countries, such as Italy, should simply ask the relevant local politicians to round up and send north a few thousand peasants, including a fair distribution of old people, women and children. Then we can amputate their legs under decent, clean surgical conditions, fit false ones, and send them home again? We would, of course, have to pay the arms companies for their loss of useful trade, but as we are effectively subsidising them already, who could possibly object? It’s such a modest proposal ...

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

It’s horrific, isn’t it. This puts everything into perspective – Diana, Princess of Wales, after visiting child victims of land-mines in Angola. Even if life did exist elsewhere, we might not recognise it. Absence of evidence won’t be evidence of absence – Professor Sir Martin Rees, *Astronomer Royal*.

There is an unconscious aggression on the part of the cougher. I don’t know why they do it. No one coughs in other countries – Harold Pinter, playwright, on audience behaviour in the theatre.

The Spice Girls are more interesting because they disprove this theory that the young cannot remember the horrors of a Labour administration – Bernard Jenkin, Tory MP.

The last thing you need on a tough expedition is an eccentric. We select people for our expeditions who are completely level-headed and stable. If we spot any eccentricity, we try to beat it out – Sir Rannulph Fiennes, explorer.

Most London houses have anorexia, tall and skinny like their owners. I’d never looked up so many noses till I came here – Kathy Lette, *Australian novelist*.

We have done our whack. We’ve increased productivity with fewer men – but it’s not enough for Ford – Peter Taylor, production worker 45, commenting on news that 1,300 jobs are to be axed at Ford’s Halewood plant.

Dogs are a lifeline for the homeless

Sir: The National Canine Defence League (NCDL) – the UK’s largest dog welfare charity – was delighted to read about Lady Apsley’s support for Oliver Lomasney and his dog, Ryan (“And now, for a change, good news to prove that people have a heart”, 17 January). The piece highlighted the importance of homeless people having a companion animal, often a lifeline and only friend.

The NCDL Hope Project provides preventive veterinary health care (vaccinations, worming and neutering) at its monthly outreach clinics to ensure that the dogs on the streets benefit from good care, regardless of their owners’ circumstances. These dog-owners are amongst the most caring and their pets are very well looked after.

Often homeless people cannot find accommodation that allows pets, forcing the owner to make an agonising decision between losing their dog or getting a roof over their head. Understandably, many people cannot bear to part with their best friend.

CLAIRISA BALDWIN
NCDL Chief Executive
London EC1

Musical climaxes

Sir: So you mean that Jilly Cooper is so inexperienced as never to have bonked on a glockenspiel? (“Percussionists do it standing up”, 16 January.) By heck, but I remember when in the old days a married couple of my acquaintance were almost deafened while bonking inside one of the timpani during a performance at the Festival Hall of Nielsen’s Second Symphony.

Elsewhere, a year or so later, seven of us made a hell of a mess of a set of cymbals; I think the music was Beethoven, but I honestly cannot remember.

PAUL BARNETT
Exeter, Devon

Ford carp

Sir: One can only applaud Ford for their remarkable sensitivity in starting an advertising campaign today (16 January) with the copy “Work less and you’ll be richer.” No doubt this kind of public domain counselling for laid-off workers from Halewood will be seen as a trend-setter.

MATTHEW FOX
Southsea, Hampshire



Under the volcano: ash darkens the sky over Montserrat. The Caribbean island’s economy is in ruins

Stricken island let down by Britain

Sir: I recently went to Montserrat, to paint the volcano which has been erupting for 16 months. This has had a devastating effect on the people and infrastructure of this tiny Caribbean island.

Their only town, Plymouth, has been evacuated and their tourist-based economy has collapsed. The south end of the island, where most cultivation took place, has been abandoned. Of the 12,000 population only 7,000 remain, the rest scattered through the Caribbean and to Britain.

Montserrat is a British colony, but I’m ashamed to say that this distinction does not seem to have afforded them much advantage in their time of great need.

Many of the Montserratians have been evacuated to the north of the island, but have nowhere to live. The solution has been to convert churches, and to erect metal warehouse buildings. When these arrived they had no windows, sanitation or cooking facilities; so these had to be cobbled together by the local government.

Spasmodically for the past 16 months, and continuously since April 1996, these unsuitable buildings have each been inhabited by 40 or 50 people living dormitory-style, their beds 2ft apart. They have no privacy, no family areas; they were allowed to bring no possessions. These squalid conditions are destroying their families.

Many Montserratians live in modest wooden houses set in small gardens, which they cultivate. Very

little attempt seems to have been made to provide this simple necessity for the evacuees.

Unemployment is now at a high level, and around 70 per cent of the population live on food stamps and a rudimentary social security system. Building houses and clearing land would provide work and housing.

The British government bears a large responsibility for this state of affairs. We have apparently allocated £23m to the island for disaster relief but it is hard to see much evidence of it being wisely spent, except on the excellent team of British volcanologists. We maintain a governor in a chauffeur-driven Range Rover. Prestige projects are planned, consultants take their fees, but nothing changes for the evacuees.

TONY FOSTER
Tynardreath, Cornwall

It’s lonely at the top with the CV of a confirmed ‘nerd’

Sir: Charlie Skelton’s article on listing hobbies in your CV (“Sky divers need not apply”, 16 January) makes disturbing reading for confirmed loners like me (hobbies: gardening, sitting in libraries for hours, Internet discussion groups, hill-walking in New Zealand).

To redress the balance, I would like to point out that not all loners are problematic in the context of employment. Indeed, annoying though it may be to scientists who resent the “nerdy” stereotype, our personality type is rather better suited to many types of scientific research (where dedicated interest in a very focused

area, perhaps devoid of “human interest”, is often necessary) than are those of more “well-rounded people-persons”. I like to think that loners and people-persons complement each other, both types having their value in different circumstances.

PETER RICHARDSON
Milton, Cambridgeshire

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

the saturday story

The Crown points to the penalty spot

In a week that saw courtroom allegations of match fixing rock the foundations of one of the fiercest competitions in the world, Michael Streeter asks: just how do you prove a deliberate mistake?

As courtroom slips go, it was a minor one. When a juror was unsure whether a future commitment would make it difficult for him to take part in the eight-week trial, Mr Justice Tuckey interjected: "I'll take a bet on you." The laughter echoed around Winchester Crown Court, as he quickly corrected himself. "Sorry, I will not take a bet on you..."

The judge had seen the funny side of it, and had unintentionally touched on the issue lying at the heart of the footballing trial of the century, involving three former Premier League footballers: John Fashanu, Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers. After David Calvert QC took three days to open the complex prosecution case – a painstaking process described even by the judge as an "ordeal" – at least one theme has emerged: how in the early Nineties a Far Eastern gambling syndicate was apparently not prepared to accept the normal hazards of betting on the results of sporting fixtures.

Instead, the Indonesian group – about whom little has so far emerged, apart from the alleged actions of the fourth defendant, Heng Sun Lim – wanted the ultimate gambler's delight: a sure-fire bet which involved a stake on a football match thousands of miles away in the cold of an English winter whose (likely) result they already knew.

Fast forward to the current

defendants – two of them are goalkeepers, significantly, say the Crown – and the allegation that they agreed to help fix the results of matches in return for sums possibly as high as £125,000. No one has said how much the syndicate staked or won on these matches, but the scale of rewards said to be available to the players alone provides a clue.

If the allegations are proven, the implications are almost unthinkable for football fans. That as supporters shiver in the stands on windswept, wet afternoons, the tackling, shooting, passing and blocking going on between 22 men on the field in front of them may be an illusion. That somewhere out there, one idol of the terraces is fighting hard not to make sure your team wins – but to help them lose.

Moreover, the "soft" goal you moan about on the way home was not an infuriating but (eventually) forgivable mistake, rather a calculated error committed by a player who rejected the informal code of the professional sportsman inside himself, lured by the call of what Grobbelaar allegedly referred to as the "greenback". Even worse, as a direct consequence someone sitting thousands of miles away rakes in a fat profit from a game whose result he already "knew".

Even the "blinding" saves may not be quite what they seem. The court was told that Grobbelaar dived the wrong way against one shot, but that stubbornly the ball "hit my hand". What makes this prospect so shocking is the idea – as yet unproven – that any professional footballer, their competitive instincts honed since the first tussles in the playground, could try to lose.

Grobbelaar, the intensely competitive Zimbabwean, is supposed to have summed up this dilemma in conversation with his former friend and business partner Chris Vincent. Bemoaning his inability to stop pulling off saves even during the "chucked" matches, he told Mr Vincent: "I'm my own worst enemy on that. Because I know I do not like to lose. It's instinctive."

A number of football matches have been fingered by the prosecution as suspect games after which money was paid, or was due to be paid, to the fixers if the result was right.

One was the celebrated Liverpool/Manchester United game on 4 January 1994, a game that was described even in the dry atmosphere of the courtroom as "marvellous", and which ended in a thrilling 3-3 draw. Grobbelaar is said to have told Mr Vincent that two brilliant saves in the second half cost him £125,000.

Hans Segers, a Dutchman who played in goal for the unfashionable Premier League side Wimbledon, is claimed to have stashed a total of £104,000 in a Swiss bank account under the name Gloves 1 after at least 12 matches lost by his team.

One of these was a crucial relegation game against Everton in May 1994, which the Merseysiders needed to win to stay in the lucrative surroundings of the Premier League. They did, 3-2.

John Fashanu, a former striker with Wimbledon and Aston Villa, is accused of pocketing £61,000 after two games.

But despite the central importance of these matches to the case, the Crown will not show the jury how the suspect goals in these allegedly "thrown" matches were scored. The only exception was Grobbelaar's failed effort to stop a shot from Coventry City striker Dion Dublin when the goalkeeper was playing for Southampton – he has since moved to Plymouth Argyle – in September 1994.

In fact, Mr Calvert Smith

told the jury, it is "next to impossible" to look at a goal and say whether it was caused by an accidental or deliberate mistake. With what may have been a gentle sideswipe at television pundits, Mr Calvert Smith said there were always goals scored where afterwards – with the benefit of hindsight – the commentators would say, "he should have done better".

Instead, the prosecution is relying on evidence linking members of the alleged "corrupt scheme" just before and just after football matches, and sums of money later given and received by the defendants, all of whom deny the charges of conspiracy to try to fix games.

The prosecution claims that there were two separate but

parallel betting and fixing schemes, one involving Lim, Fashanu and Grobbelaar, the other with Lim, Fashanu and Segers. Lim is described as the London-based representative of the Indonesian betting syndicate receiving more than £500,000 over four years in payments from the Far East, and Fashanu as the "middle man". Both were said to be in regular telephone contact with the Far East. Segers and Grobbelaar – said not to have known of each other's involvement – were two goalkeepers, the position on a football team most likely to be able to influence the result of a game, say the prosecution.

There was also, it is said, a distinct pattern to events on matchdays. In the mornings, Lim, a 31-year-old bespectacled

businessman in North London who drove a Mercedes, would call the players allegedly involved and also Indonesia – to people named Loe Bon Swe and Johannes Josef, whose partner, "Elly", was the conduit for channelling funds to Britain. Lim would often speak to Fashanu as well, and then immediately after the game Lim would ring Indonesia again, sometimes on his mobile phone if he was attending the match. Further contact with the players came later.

On one occasion Grobbelaar told Mr Vincent that Lim – whom he called "the Short Man", or "Bubba" – would be "mad as a snake" after a particular result. But when the goalkeeper's team, Southampton, "steamrolled" Coventry 3-1 in a powerful performance

after the Midlands had taken the lead, Lim, who was at the game, supposedly told him: "Tonight you had no chance. No chance, Mr Grobbelaar."

The clusters of telephone calls between the defendants, gleaned from laboriously sifting telephone records, is said to show that the members of the scheme would often discuss in advance which games to "chuck". The ability of mobile telephone networks to tell in which cell site area a phone is being used has been drawn on by the prosecution to "prove" where certain defendants were at certain times. These include an alleged occasion the night before a Liverpool/Norwich City game when Grobbelaar asked his Liverpool room-mate to cover for him as he left the team hotel to meet Lim at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London, to pick up £500 expenses.

This lengthy matching of hundreds of telephone calls with the supposed movement of the defendants contributed to the length and technicality of the prosecution opening.

The pace may change when the prosecution witness, Mr Vincent, gives evidence on Monday. It was his decision to approach *The Sun* newspaper for financial gain with allegations about Grobbelaar and match-fixing which triggered a police investigation.

The exchanges between him and Grobbelaar, taped by *The Sun* in what has been described as a "sting" operation, and read to the jury, have provided details of supposedly "thrown" matches and Grobbelaar's alleged payments, including one of £40,000 handed over to Fashanu after Liverpool lost 3-0 to Newcastle.

The fellow Zimbabweans were involved in a safari business, and were close friends, but when they fell out in a row over money Mr Vincent approached the newspaper, which printed what Mr Calvert Smith described as a "sensational" story. Once the sting had become public, Hampshire police began a lengthy investigation. Just how much of it was true and can be proven will be known when the jury brings in its verdict some time in March.

Meanwhile, Mr Lim and the three footballers will continue their lengthy stay in the dock. So far they have shown little emotion, preferring to sit bolt upright and poker-faced in sick, very soccer-player suits.

Grobbelaar, though, did react when the jury was shown his unsuccessful effort to stop the Dion Dublin goal against Coventry City. A nervous, possibly embarrassed smile came to his lips as the video showed the ball plopping gently into the net.

But, as Mr Calvert Smith said early in the trial, any goalkeeper can make a mistake.



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jo brand's week

As a student I was always in debt, and attempting to juggle resources available with all my expenses was an almost impossible task sometimes. Banks had to be constantly lied to, cajoled and ignored when things got tight.

From what I remember of my bank and the banks of friends, although they got pretty shirty and refused increased overdrafts from time to time, they certainly did not ever threaten to send the bailiffs in. And I never came across a student who attempted suicide because of threats from the bank. What an appalling and pointless waste of a life for a Manchester student to kill himself over £778. It seems that there has been a real change in attitude to students these days, led, of course, by our caring, sharing Government.

Being a student used to be a carefree time, during which many 18- to 20-year-olds got their last taste of gloriously irresponsible freedom before knocking under to a grown-up life of drudgery and sobriety. The fact that it was not available to all was the biggest problem. Now student life is just another period of the relentless struggle that so many people have to go through as adults.

The Advertising Standards Authority has ruled that a poster used to advertise Harvey Nichols, the nob's shop, which portrayed a supermodel wearing a dog lead, is not sexist.

I don't know how many people have seen the brilliant heavy metal spoof *This is Spinal Tap*, but I remember a scene in which the band's new album, *Sniff the Glove*, and its cover were being discussed. The cover portrayed a naked woman with a dog lead on and I remember people in the cinema laughing uproariously, because it was so obviously offensive and ridiculous and so quintessentially "heavy metal".

It seems those days are gone. The more we move backwards in time and women increasingly allow themselves to be portrayed as passive, controlled things, like wot they did in the old days, the more blokes are going to crap on us, like wot they did in the old days. What's next on Harvey Nick's advertising agenda – spot of wife beating, perhaps?

Harvey Nicks is, of course, the Queen of Hearts' favourite shopping experience, but she has had to forgo flashing the gold card

for a bit because she is off round the world being humanitarian and not political. I don't really know if she knows what she's being, to be honest, except that she thinks we might all like her a bit more for it.

No one is denying the appalling damage that landmines do to human limbs, or the cynical policy the Tories have towards the existence of the things, but surely Diana should stop playing at global Lady Bountiful and sort herself out. She is currently contributing to the stock of rich, posh people opening their mouths on relatively safe political issues for effect, while continuing to lead a deb's life in various clubs and at polo matches.

I don't give a toss about which royal cures more about which underprivileged issue. If they really give a monkey's

about the plight of the world's put-upon, they'd start by bringing the monarchy down faster than you could say, "Pass the beluga, darling".

Meanwhile, old Fergies is desperately trying to pay off her rather large debts by taking a million green ones off Weight Watchers. (Just think how many bars of choc that would get you.)

Weight Watchers tends to use humiliation as a tool to control the ravenous appetites of its members by weighing them in front of their peers and having a go at them. The Duchess of York will be well acquainted with the concept of humiliation, having run the gauntlet of tabloid savagery for some years. Still, no transparent attempt for her at winning the hearts and

minds of the people, she just wants the dosh.

Country Life is not a magazine I buy and therefore I associate it only with agonising trips to have my molars mucked about with. But that's not the only reason I don't like it. I don't like it because it represents a smug, privileged group of hereditary morons who should have been chased off their land years ago. It consists mainly of articles about huntin' and fishin', pictures of rich girls destined to be hitched to personality-free, chinless wonders, and adverts for jackets that cost more than your average person spends on a holiday. Its anachronistic presence in our midst is a sharp reminder of all the horrors that are still tearing apart the fox population for a laugh. This sad publication has seen fit to drag itself into the 20th century by including some women without any clothes on between its shiny covers. The emphasis is on "tasteful", you understand.

No one with a comprehensive education will get a look in here. One would have hoped that *Country Life* might have hauled itself up to date by just not existing any more. I'll just have to stop going to the dentist.



and some reasons to

party poopers

Labour is right not to want to bankroll the ill-judged Millennium Exhibition

david aaronovitch



If ever you feel inclined to bend to the "wouldn't it be better if a committee of wise men and women ran the country?" argument (a variant of which is to praise the House of Lords, precisely because it is not democratically elected), stop quickly, and say these two words: "Millennium Exhibition".

As I write, a huge attempt is underway to save the project, which is to be based on contaminated land of a former gas works in the London borough of Greenwich.

The problem, we are told, is that the materials from which the Greenwich Millennium dome is to be made must be ordered right now – this minute – if they are to arrive in time. To do that, the project must be sure of that section of its funding that is pledged by the private sector. And the private companies will not stump up unless the Government guarantees extra Lottery support, if required, to minimise possible losses.

But – and here's the twist – it's the Labour government whose support they are demanding, and Labour is not keen on giving that pledge. On Thursday the *Evening Standard* – whose columnist Simon Jenkins is a leading member of the Millennium Commission – laid into Labour's refusal to commit itself.

Labour had "almost certainly doomed" the whole enterprise. The shadow Heritage Secretary had "dithered, dallied and holidayed" while a project "involving hundreds of millions of pounds and thousands of jobs has... awaited a clear judgement from him". With the certainty of inside knowledge it stated that at "every stage Labour has been told as much as government ministers about the Greenwich project". Finally, it asserted such prevarication was "a grim omen for the future".

There is something surreal about all this. While it is certainly true that Dr Cunningham's enthusiasm for his brief (following a spell as shadow Foreign Secretary) is not substantial, and his work rate is unprodigious, can it really be true that a huge project, planned by a committee (appointed not long after the last election four-and-a-half years ago), should depend on commitments from an opposition that has not been in power in this country?

... and some real reasons to party

Forget the millennium: there are more worthy anniversaries around. For this year sees the bicentenary of the first recorded appearance of the word "centennial", and if that's not worth a party in Greenwich, I don't know what is. Unless it's the centenary of "jock-strap", the tricentenary of "what's-his-name" (first used by Dryden) and the 700th anniversary of such basic concepts as "marriage", "duty", "label" and "sodomy".

A search through the *Oxford English Dictionary* on CD-Rom shows 1897 to have been a year of bad emotions. *Alphobia* (fear of pain) and *anhedonia* (absence of pleasure) both made their first appearance. Before then, also, no *knickered au pair* could be *reshuffled* on the *Davenport*.

By contrast, 1797 was a year of ideological iconoclasm with the *anti-social propagandist phenomenology* of the time enabling the first *autobiography of a manager* with a taste for *semiotics*.

The year 1897 brought us the first hailstorm and thundercloud. Not the weather for having a barbecue, sailing one's *calamarian* or engaging in ur-

for nearly two decades?

There is a dispute about who told whom what and when. Dr Cunningham argues that the urgent need for Labour in opposition to write a blank cheque (payable by Labour in government) for up to £500m in Lottery money over two years is a recent phenomenon. And it must be any reasonable person's suspicion that had the private sector poured money into the venture at the rate originally anticipated, Dr Jack's agreement would not have been so assiduously sought. But the private sector has not stumped up. The chairman of the project resigned last month. And the public have not been excited by the scheme.

The idea of an immense exhibition on the theme of time has failed to set the nation alight – and the prospect of the site's long-term use as yet another sports or leisure centre is depressing, rather than uplifting. The budget for the Exhibition, already high, went higher, and then was slashed as the ambitious nature of the plan was scaled down. Even so there is a massive contingency element, which if entirely spent, would absorb £300m alone.

From the day when Tony and Gordon became next-door neighbours in Downing Street, all kinds of folks will be looking for lots of cash, and will be turned away.

To find the money for the projects that the new government will regard as essential, will mean scouring budgets, fiddling with invisible allowances and tax rates and – not least – applying Lottery monies to things like homework centres (it is instructive that most of the criticism of Labour's homework plans focused on those children who had nowhere to study). Putting up VAT and income tax rates will not be an option.

Now ask yourself which you would rather have, a network of homework centres fitting into a plan to transform the education of under-achievers? Or a guarantee to an unelected bunch of journalists and quango-ites, that their overruns on an insufficiently popular project will be bankrolled?

So my message to Tony Blair is this. Do not be bullied by the likes of the *Standard* and the members of the Hereditary. The electorate will have put you in power to achieve much more important things than indulging such people's whims. Say No.

nation (in its original meaning of diving).

A chap in 1597 could have been rendered *frigid*, or *infertile*, by the incompetent removal of his *scrotum*. It was also the first time anyone became *legless* (though its connection with alcohol dates back only to 1976).

Talking of which, *trebiate* hit the language in 1497, which seems to have displeased his spouse. Why else should she *excoriate* the victim with a *rolling-pin*? She could even have used the *pillowtalk* of 1397 – a form of thumbscrews designed for the fingers.

Thanks to Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle*, 1297 provided a rich word-harvest. An *ant* could prepare *dinner* for her *niece* or *nephew* or *accuse* a *bachelor* of causing her *pain*, the *bastard*.

And why not bring back some words that have not survived the centuries? While *gafest* (1897: a gathering for talk) is not to be encouraged, might we not profit from more *amorism* (1897: loving sentiment)? Let's reinstate it before we *forsooth* (1297: to lose through idleness) the chance.

William Hartston

Justice for the military is far from uniform

by Patricia Wynn Davies

"Fast-track justice" was how it was being viewed in west Belfast, as Lee Clegg and his supporters celebrated the decision by Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to refer his murder conviction back to the Court of Appeal after a mere six months' consideration.

There is no doubt that the paratrooper, who served two years of his sentence for the killing of a teenage joyrider on a pre-cessante September night in 1990, has an arguable case. An inch-thick dossier of detailed ballistic and forensic evidence sent to Sir Patrick last July suggests that the fourth of four shots said to have been fired from his rifle – ruled as excessive force by the trial judge because any danger from the car that had raced towards his patrol had passed – could have come from the weapon of another soldier.

There seems little doubt either that Clegg, now a lance corporal and a PT instructor at the parachute training centre in Catterick in North Yorkshire, was the victim of a prosecution which was far from even-handed about the events that night.

Why was it that of the group of soldiers firing a volley of bullets out on the Glen Road in the darkness, only 21-year-old Pte Clegg, the youngest in the patrol, was singled out for the murder of 18-year-old Karen Reilly, a passenger in the car? Forensic evidence presented to Sir Patrick indicates not only that the murder bullet was fired by someone else, but also that one of the men in another "brick" of soldiers further down the road fired the shot which killed 17-year-old Martin Peake, the driver of the stolen Vauxhall Astra, again at a time when the need for self-defence had passed. That bullet was never found. But there was no "common purpose" prosecution involving the other soldiers, the device frequently used to secure murder convictions in other Northern Ireland cases where the Crown cannot prove who inflicted a fatality.

As one former paratrooper present that night has put it, "all of us could have been charged with murder". Instead, the seeds had been sown for the unprecedented phenomenon of a miscarriage of justice campaign that had the backing of the Army's top brass.

By March 1995, Sir Patrick, not a man usually given to making hasty decisions, referred the case to the Northern Ireland Life Sentence Review Board, in view of "exceptional mitigating" factors. Thousands of people had rung into mainland newspapers demanding Clegg's release.

By July, following a recommendation from the board, he was freed on licence. With the time spent on remand, he had served a total of four years. It is the ensuing unrest on the streets of Belfast that stuck in people's minds. Less noticed was the action of Breidge Gadd, Northern Ireland's



Case far from closed: Pte Clegg; protesters demonstrate against his release; the murdered teenager Karen Reilly

Referring the Clegg case back to the Court of Appeal has only confirmed to the people of west Belfast that there is 'fast-track' justice for British soldiers

chief probation officer, whose sense of injustice led her to resign her membership of the board in protest at the case being reviewed seven years before the normal date. The usual date of the first substantive review of mandatory life sentence prisoners is 10 years, and most serve 14 or 15. For many, the decision was proof of a system of differential justice.

Clegg was not the first soldier to have secured early release. Eighteen-year-old Private Ian Thain, who shot 22-year-old Thomas Reilly, the

road manager for the Bananarama pop group, was paroled after serving 26 months of a life sentence for murder.

And now it seems that the two-tier approach could be in the process of securing legal, as well as political, backing after a ruling in a Northern Ireland High Court case last month. Two Scots Guards who lost their appeals against convictions for murdering Belfast teenager Peter McBride in 1992 argued that they were being treated less favourably than Pte Thain or paratrooper

Clegg because Sir Patrick had decided in their cases that the question of release should not be referred to the review board until late 1998, still well short of the 10-year mark. The judge upheld a judicial review brought by the soldiers, James Fisher and Mark Wright, and directed the Northern Ireland Secretary to reconsider his decision.

It was learned during the case that officials in the Northern Ireland Office had recommended that Thain should be released after serving three years and 11 months, including

time spent awaiting trial. The two Scottish soldiers have spent more than four years in custody.

If soldiers are going to be compared with soldiers, and the rule of law mixed up with politics, there is little evidence of the system being prepared to compare the fate of soldiers with other cases where a miscarriage of justice has been alleged. The decision to refer the Clegg case back to the Court of Appeal has only confirmed in the minds of the people of west Belfast that there is fast-track justice for British soldiers while others who dispute their convictions make little headway in getting their cases returned to the courts.

They include Billy Gorman, convicted at the age of 14 of murdering a policeman in 1980. He has served his 14 years but, like Clegg, wants the conviction expunged. At his trial, his counsel took the unusual step of putting Gorman back in the witness box after he was found guilty to protest his innocence. Evidence that he was ill-treated in custody and that the police tampered with interview notes were submitted to the Northern Ireland Office. A few days ago, he had a communication from the authorities – to be told there would be no prosecution of the police officers involved.

Another long-standing application is that of Neil Latimer, one of the "UDR Four", who was convicted in 1986 of the murder of a Roman Catholic. The most telling case of all, perhaps, is that of the so-called "Casement Three", who were convicted of the murder of two Army corporals who had been dragged from their car near a Belfast funeral in 1988 and beaten up in Casement Park before being driven away and killed by the IRA. No one had any difficulty in bringing a "common purpose" prosecution and securing a conviction here. No one alleged that any of the three were involved in the actual murder, or were present when the soldiers were murdered, or that they were significantly involved in the lead-up to the murder or that they had paramilitary connections or previous criminal records.

The Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Northern Ireland civil liberties council, has concluded in the firmest terms that they are not guilty of murder. The Northern Ireland Office rejected their plea for their convictions to be reviewed again by the courts. But then cases like this never reached the Cabinet table.

Don't sell out the Tube

A public-private partnership – not privatisation – is the solution to London Underground's problems, says Glenda Jackson

If the Conservative Party loses the next election, it will be for many reasons: rises in tax, and the lies that accompanied them; weakness on law and order; the rundown of our schools and health services. But in London, a crucial battleground, there is another issue set to deal a heavy blow to the Tories' electoral fortunes: Tube privatisation.

It is important to understand what Tube privatisation is not. It is not, as ministers pretend, an imaginative attempt to introduce new funding into an ageing system. The Conservatives did not stumble into power yesterday, they did so 18 years ago. Were privatisation the answer, London Underground would already be privatised. John Major's rushing where even Thatcher feared to tread indicates desperation, not inspiration.

His desperation is twofold. First, insufficient growth has been generated to support a network used daily by two-and-a-half million Londoners, most of whom vote. Second, there is Major's need to placate those in his party clamouring for a dose of the old-time privatisation religion. Major is trapped between the rock of a deeply unpopular policy, and the hard place of the radical Tory right.

But the decision to reach for the zero option of outright privatisation reveals more than just the desperation of an increasingly embattled leader. It also reveals how the Conservative policy-making machine has reached the end of the line. To get to grips with London Underground's problems it is important to face some hard facts.

First, they will not be tackled by hurling limitless amounts of money around the network. Resources will be tight whoever is in power. The key is to ensure funding targets those areas of the system where it is most needed, and can be most effective. That is why when in government our priority will be to join with the private sector in channelling investment towards the core of the network, where the collapsing embankments, ageing signalling and

crumbling tunnels now present a very real threat to the integrity of the system. Conservative ministers reject this approach and conjure up ever grander visions. But, as ever, their promises are undermined by their record. In 18 years since they were elected, not a single new major infrastructure project has been completed on the network. And it is no coincidence that



'Resources will be tight whoever is in power'

the last new project, the Jubilee Line, opened on 1 May, 1979, two days before Thatcher took office.

Second, the Tube still suffers from significant waste and inefficiency. Much of this is the result of ministerial incompetence, as underlined by the Crossrail fiasco, which saw £126m squandered on a project that never left the drawing board. There are also doubts about

whether the current methods of financing provide sufficient stability for the Underground to make best use of its available resources. Hence our commitment to a complete review of financing.

Again, ministers reject this option, and in doing so they underline how a fear of change can be so much more costly than change itself. No government can tackle the problems facing the Tube on its own. Real improvements can only be made through securing fresh investment from sources other than the already hard-pressed taxpayer and commuter. That is why we are committed to securing a genuine partnership between government and business.

The Conservatives have never been able to get to grips with the concept of private financing. Partly that is because as a Labour initiative their instinctive reaction is to oppose it. For today's Tory party, raised at the shrine of market forces, and schooled in the evils of "big government", the idea of employer and employee, or state and business, working together is anathema. So great is the Government's opposition to such a partnership that Chancellor Kenneth Clarke recently warned London businesses to "stop rattling the can" for the Underground.

But if the Tories recoil in horror at the concept of cooperation, that is their problem. London businesses have shown their keenness to seek a solution to London's transport crisis. And we intend to work with them, to start to put London Underground back on track.

The *Evening Standard* described John Major's privatisation plans for the Tube as the "longest suicide note in history". That underestimates the desperation with which he will fight to stay in Downing Street. But if Tube privatisation does play a part in John Major's downfall, it may turn out to be the saviour of London's transport system after all.

The author is MP for Hampstead and a Labour spokesman on transport.

No 34

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

On Monday Waterstone's will be publishing an essential guide to 20th Century literature: the 100 greatest books of the century, as voted for by Waterstone's customers and Channel 4 viewers. How many of them will you have read? What will be at number one? Is *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* really the 34th greatest book of the century? To find out what some well known names think about the top 100, watch Book Choice on Channel 4 every evening next week at 7.55pm.

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Crisis deepens at Morgan Grenfell

Jill Treanor
Banking Correspondent

Sparks fly at fund management firm as Nicola Horlick goes on publicity offensive to win her job back

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell plunged deeper into crisis yesterday after Nicola Horlick, the City's "Superwoman", threatened to take legal action against the firm and jumped on a plane to Frankfurt to demand back her £1m-a-year job.

Two diametrically opposed versions of the events of the last week were issued yesterday by the DMG and Horlick camps, as Mrs Horlick confronted a se-

nior legal official of Deutsche Bank at the group's Frankfurt head office.

Mrs Horlick, who has just turned 36, earned her title "Superwoman" for her reputation of being able to combine a hectic family life - she has five children and an investment banker husband - and her demanding job as head of Morgan Grenfell's £18bn pensions fund business.

Her hitherto unblemished

career was thrown into the limelight on Tuesday when Robert Smith, the new chief executive of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, suspended her for alleged breach of contract after suspecting she had been attempting to poach staff to move to a rival fund management group.

"She has claims for unfair and wrongful dismissal," said John Farr, her solicitor at Herbert Smith, the law firm. The claim

is sizable, running to at least £1m.

She denied the accusations by the firm that she had been in talks with another employer and trying to take her current team with her.

"There has been a very large misunderstanding. They should have asked me, they decided to suspend me on the basis of hearsay," Mrs Horlick said as she arrived in Frankfurt yesterday afternoon.

By then calm and collected, she had earlier charged into MGAM's London offices in Finsbury Circus, accompanied by photographers, demanding to meet Mr Smith.

She failed to find him or Michael Dobson, chief executive of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, the investment bank of which MGAM is a part.

So, at lunchtime, she rang BBC's *Working Lunch* programme from Heathrow airport

to announce her intentions to meet the board of Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt. "I'm going to go and say this is the case, these are the facts. I think it is unfair. I've built you a very successful business."

"I'm very keen to stick to my team and do the best I can for my clients," Mrs Horlick said.

Mr Smith said the remaining 30 fund managers at the firm had written yesterday to the 350 UK clients and confirmed they

all intended to stay with MGAM.

Her actions prompted anger among many of her colleagues in the leafy surrounds of Finsbury Square in the City, where there has never in living memory been such a public dispute about a resignation.

"As a result of all this she's lost a lot of friends," said one source who had been speaking with sources inside MGAM.

Her departure has added to

the problems of the Peter Young affair and are likely to raise serious questionmarks in Frankfurt about the management in London, headed by Mr Dobson. After the Peter Young affair, Rolf Breuer - soon to be the chairman of Deutsche - investigated the London operation but left it more or less intact, and it did not affect the career of Mr Dobson, a main board member.

With the second fiasco, a senior investment adviser said "If you were sitting in Frankfurt you would be pretty concerned about this."

'No other course of action but to suspend her'

Jill Treanor

Robert Smith, the newly installed chief executive of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, was adamant yesterday that he had evidence that Nicola Horlick had been attempting to poach key staff to move to another firm. He disputed her version of events point by point.

He said the evidence of poaching was the reason why he suspended her from her £1m-a-year job on Tuesday, even though only the previous Friday he had offered her the promotion she so clearly wanted. Mr Smith saw her as his obvious successor as soon as she returned from maternity leave in October, and had discussed this with her on a number of occasions.

The job offer last Friday came after a meeting between Mr Smith and the six top members of her staff that day. At this meeting it emerged that the staff believed she was planning to leave, and wished to take some of them with her.

"They alleged that she was planning to take a team out, and the members did not want to go," said Mr Smith. However, it was not this alleged attempt to persuade staff to follow her that led to her dismissal. Rather, it led to an offer of promotion to keep her and the team.

Mr Smith offered her a job as his number two - managing director of Morgan Grenfell Asset Management - and they shook hands. The offer was not in writing but, said Mr Smith yesterday, "My word is my bond."

He went back to his Scottish home that weekend believing he had defused the situation. But, he took a phone call which aroused his suspicions that she was still approaching senior managers about moving en masse to a rival firm.

Mr Smith refuses to say who made the phone call but it was

clearly from someone he knew and trusted.

"The caller gave me information which suggested she had a hidden agenda," Mr Smith said. He spent the weekend following up the leads, and pursued his enquiries on Monday. By Tuesday he knew he had no other course of action than to suspend her.

He said he followed all the official internal procedures, which give the person under suspension the chance to reply. They agreed that she would attend a disciplinary hearing which would take place yesterday.

"I was quite convinced there was a case to answer," he said. But that hearing did not take place. Mrs Horlick instead visited Mr Smith on Wednesday to talk over the events and on Thursday her resignation was faxed by her lawyer to Morgan Grenfell's lawyer.

In a memo to his 700 strong staff yesterday he said he stood by his actions. "We are completely satisfied that we have acted properly throughout. MGAM is a great business. I have received whole hearted support for the management team in dealing with this matter."

"We are looking forward to continuing the development of the business in 1997 and beyond. No one individual is bigger than the institution."

Mrs Horlick had been playing key role in rebuilding client relationships and staff morale after the Peter Young fiasco last year. Morgan Grenfell insiders admit she was furious about Michael Dobson's handling of the Keith Percy affair but are reluctant to say that they agreed with her.

Asked whether MGAM in general or the pension fund business would be hurt, Mr Smith said: "It's not very pretty reading of course... but I don't think it will do lasting damage."



Opposing forces (clockwise from above): Nicola Horlick; Michael Dobson, chief executive of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell; Robert Smith, chief executive of MGAM; and Rolf Breuer, soon to be the chairman of Deutsche

All in a busy day: 'Superwoman' flies from London to Frankfurt

Early morning - Holds impromptu press conference outside her Kensington home. Dashes off to the City in her bright red Alfa Romeo for showdown with Robert Smith, chief executive of Morgan Grenfell.

10.35am - Robert Smith was not in the office, and she is spotted from Morgan's building by Maryn Dorn, head of personnel.

10.30am - Storms into Morgan Grenfell's City offices with media entourage in tow. Sweeps past security guard, and strolls into her old office.

Lunchtime - Flies from Heathrow to Frankfurt to confront Deutsche Morgan Grenfell chiefs.

Early afternoon - Makes two phone calls on arrival, told Deutsche management will not meet her, and then books return flight.

Mid-afternoon - Pushes on regardless. Meets unnamed official at Deutsche's headquarters, accompanied by a reporter from Reuters to act as her witness.

Noon - Gives two interviews to BBC TV.

'It's a disgrace and untrue' friends maintain

Nicola Horlick vowed last night to "undo the great wrong that has been done against me", accusing her former employer, Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, of orchestrating a press campaign against her which had distorted and misrepresented events.

According to friends, Mrs Horlick had done her utmost to hold her team together in the face of threats from a group of five key fund managers. She acted as their go-between with MGAM's chief executive, Robert Smith.

"Then the company turns round and accuses her of being the ring leader," the friend said. "It's a disgrace and completely untrue. She's a very determined woman, a sort of young Margaret Thatcher, and she's going to get this thing corrected come hell or high water."

Sources sympathetic to Mrs Horlick's position say she was profoundly shocked by the way in which Keith Percy, the man who had recruited her, was fired with four colleagues in the wake of the Peter Young débacle.

She believed Mr Percy had been made a scapegoat and had fallen victim to a press campaign to get rid of him. She had been horrified by the way in which his sacking had been leaked and did not believe a claim by Michael Dobson, head of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell in London, that the leak had not come in an authorised fashion from the company's public relations firm, Brunswick.

But she fought hard to keep clients, assuring them that she had no intention of leaving. Morale had none the less gone into a rapid downward spiral.

It was also a difficult time for Mrs Horlick on the domestic front. Her daughter's leukaemia had relapsed and the child was undergoing chemotherapy.

During this period Mrs Horlick had gone to Robert Smith, subsequently appointed chief

executive, and begged him to help her hold the business together. However, once in the top job, Mr Smith abandoned Mr Percy's open plan desk structure and had his own office installed "with frosted glass".

For many this proved the final straw. Three weeks before Christmas Mrs Horlick went to Mr Smith to tell him that some younger members of the team were getting "fractious".

Two weeks before Christmas a senior member of that team came to Mrs Horlick and said that he had received an ultimatum from five colleagues that if she were not given a position of authority to sort out the mess they would all leave. Mrs Horlick discussed the threat with her business committee, which she expressed her own loyalty to the company.

It was agreed that the business committee would agree a title for Mrs Horlick which would give her the authority to pull the organisation together.

On the afternoon of 10 January Robert Smith offered her the title of managing director. There was a long discussion about future plans for the business. Mrs Horlick was also told what her bonus for 1996 would be. Eventually she accepted the position. She met the rebels again long into the night, and finally succeeded in convincing them to stay.

This Monday, rumours began to circulate about mass defections from MGAM. Mrs Horlick was called at home by a "good friend" about the rumours, which included her, but utterly denied them.

The next day she was summoned to Mr Smith's office where she was suspended for alleged breach of contract.

She was escorted to her office to collect her belongings, told to hand in her pass to the building and ordered not to talk to staff or journalists.

Impatient LVMH chief cuts stake in Guinness

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

LVMH cut its 21 per cent stake in Guinness by a third yesterday, raising £559m to help pay for its purchase of a controlling stake in DFS, the world's largest duty-free shopping group.

The placing of the stake by Goldman Sachs with about 100 institutions reflected, analysts said, an increasing impatience of LVMH chief Bernard Arnault with Guinness's poor share price performance in recent years.

Guinness used the placing as an opportunity to buy in 2.3 per cent of its own shares at a discount to yesterday's opening price of 436p. It paid 414p each for all the shares Goldman

Sachs offered it and is thought to have wanted to buy in more, having already bought in 5 per cent of its shares last March for £463m.

The sale is understood to have been driven by a number of factors, including LVMH's rumoured interest in buying the whole of DFS. It currently owns 53.75 per cent. LVMH is also thought to have been unimpressed by Guinness's trading statement earlier this week, in which the beer and spirits group indicated continuing volume and pricing pressures in its United Distillers spirits arm.

LVMH said it planned to retain its remaining 14 per cent stake in Guinness, removing a potential overhang of shares

that had acted as a drag on Guinness's share price. According to the terms of a cross-shareholding arrangement between the two, LVMH is now prohibited from increasing its stake above 15 per cent.

LVMH took a shareholding in Guinness in 1988 in the wake of the illegal share support debacle during the then brewing company's bid for United Distillers. Initially both companies held 12 per cent of each other's shares but the holdings increased to 24 per cent each by 1990.

In January 1994, a restructuring of the agreement was effected to quell City concerns about Guinness having a large holding in what had become a media and luxury goods group.

Siemens does U-turn with offer for Parsons

Chris Godsmark

Siemens, the German electrical engineering group, has made an offer to buy Parsons, Rolls-Royce's historic Tyneside steam turbine business, which could save 1,000 jobs at the site.

The surprise news came just a month after Siemens' top management in Germany had apparently ruled out interest in Parsons, describing the company as "covered in red ink" in an industry burdened by huge overcapacity.

The renewed interest follows the announcement by Siemens' British management last week that it wanted to refocus its strategy from manufacturing to services. A source close to the company suggested Parsons could bolster

Siemens' power station servicing and contracting operations.

Jürgen Gehrels, Siemens' chief executive in the UK, said: "We are always looking at business opportunities, especially those where we can strengthen the position of our individual business and areas where we could improve the service we provide to our customers. I don't know yet whether Parsons is such a business opportunity but we are looking at it."

The news came as Rolls-Royce announced the loss of 333 jobs at Parsons from Monday. Barney McGill, representing the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said he would negotiate with management in an attempt to head off further redundancies.

Airbus signs partners to launch super jumbo

Michael Harrison

Airbus Industrie, the European aircraft manufacturer, yesterday moved a step closer to launching its planned 650-seat super jumbo by signing up Dutch and Belgian risk-sharing partners on the project.

The four-nation consortium aims to find risk-sharing partners for 40 per cent of the aircraft, codenamed the A3XX, which is expected to cost at least \$8bn to develop and should enter service in 2003.

The agreements signed yesterday are with Belairbus of Belgium and Fokker Aviation of the Netherlands, which was bought from the collapsed parent company by the Stork group

last July. The two partners will get business worth about \$2bn on the A3XX programme.

Alenia of Italy is already a risk-sharing partner on the A3XX and other backers are being sought in Korea and elsewhere in the Pacific Rim.

Earlier this week the four Airbus partners - British Aerospace, Aerospaciale of France, Daimler-Benz of Germany and Casa of Spain - signed a binding memorandum of understanding to convert the consortium into a limited company in 1999.

The partners have made the A3XX programme conditional on the restructuring of Airbus into a fully commercial company. Airbus expects to get au-

thorisation to offer the A3XX to customers towards the end of next year with the formal go-ahead at the end of 1999.

Boeing of the US plans to launch its own super jumbo, the 747-600, at a cost of \$5bn-\$7bn but there are doubts whether the market will sustain two rival aircraft of that size.

The A3XX would initially be a double-decker aircraft with a range of 8,500 miles, seating 555 passengers in three classes. But a stretched version is also planned, seating 656 passengers in three-class and 990 in single-class configuration.

Boeing's stretched jumbo will seat 550 passengers in three classes, compared with a capacity of just over 400 in the 747.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
FTSE 100	4197.50	+38.60	+0.9	4197.50	3632.30
FTSE 250	4565.90	+5.90	+0.1	4565.90	4015.30
FTSE 350	2082.00	+15.70	+0.8	2082.00	1616.60
FTSE Small Cap	2278.87	+11.67	+0.5	2278.87	1954.06
FTSE All Share	2055.26	+15.10	+0.7	2055.26	1791.95
New York	6705.37	+38.49	+0.6	6705.37	5032.94
Tokyo	18144.34	+51.21	+0.3	22668.80	17303.65
Hong Kong	13830.68	+64.03	+0.5	13830.68	10204.87
Frankfurt	2983.31	+4.86	+0.2	2983.31	2258.36

INTEREST RATES					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
Short sterling*	6.78	-0.01	-0.1	6.78	6.78
UK medium gilt	7.2	-0.01	-0.1	7.2	7.2
US long bond	6.54	-0.01	-0.1	6.54	6.54
Money Market Rates					
1 Month	6.12	6.25			
3 Months	5.38	5.81			
6 Months	4.38	4.43			
1 Year	3.06	3.00			
Bond Yields*					
Medium Bond (%)	7.42	7.28	7.51	7.46	
Long Bond (%)	6.53	5.56	6.80	6.01	
2 Year	2.40	1.72			
5 Year	5.73	5.82	6.59	6.59	

CURRENCIES					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low
£/\$	1.71	-0.01	-0.6	1.71	1.71
£/DM	2.67	-0.01	-0.4	2.67	2.67
£/¥	166.90	-0.01	-0.6	166.90	166.90
£/A\$	0.5982	-0.02	-0.6	0.5982	0.5982
£/NZ\$	0.5982	-0.02	-0.6	0.5982	0.5982
£/HK\$	7.75	-0.01	-0.1	7.75	7.75
£/SG\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35
£/R\$	4.75	-0.01	-0.2	4.75	4.75
£/C\$	0.65	-0.01	-1.5	0.65	0.65
£/S\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35
£/M\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35
£/P\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35
£/C\$	0.65	-0.01	-1.5	0.65	0.65
£/S\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35
£/M\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35
£/P\$	1.35	-0.01	-0.7	1.35	1.35

Kingfisher to axe 1,200 Norweb jobs

Kingfisher yesterday announced 1,200 job losses at the Norweb electrical retail chain it acquired in November in a move that will see 113 stores close, writes Nigel Cope. The redundancy figure is half the number of staff employed at the Norweb chain which Kingfisher is integrating with its Comet format.

Some 28 Norweb stores will close as well as 26 Comet outlets. All of the 57 Norweb high street stores will also close in March. Following the integration, the number of Comet branches will rise from 225 to 250. Commenting on the job losses, which were

foreshadowed at the time of the £29m deal, Comet's chief executive Eddie Styring said: "When job losses are unavoidable, we will work to minimise the effect through re-training, job sharing and job search programmes."

Separately, WH Smith is closing its 29 Playhouse video retailing stores with the loss of up to 160 jobs. The shops, mostly in the South-east, will trade for several months until their leases are sold. Peter Bamford, managing director of WH Smith retail, said the decision had been taken as a result of the group's policy to concentrate on core businesses.



JEREMY WARNER

'Most management is filled with messy compromise but that an organisation can be held to ransom by any group of employees, and do things it doesn't necessarily want to do, is completely ridiculous'

Superwoman destroys the City's star system

Question: What's the similarity between Nicola Horlick and Chris Evans? Answer: They both make more than a million a year, they've both quit their jobs this week after a mighty row with their employers, they've both got above themselves and they were both out of control - quite how much depends on who you believe. That's more or less where the comparison ends, for there isn't much of a likeness in the hair colour. There might be one other thing that unites them, however.

Personnel eruptions of this type tend to take place only in organisations which are on the ropes, in crisis or going through a protracted period of unmanaged change. They are rare, though not unheard of, in orderly, professionally managed companies with an established market position. In both these cases - Mr Evans at the BBC and Mrs Horlick at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management - it is a moot point as to who was most out of control, the employee or the employer.

Hemmed in on all sides by commercial TV and radio, the BBC isn't wholly confident of what it's trying to do any longer and as a consequence it displays all the usual characteristics - drift and clutching at straws. The Peter Young fiasco has produced a different sort of crisis at MGAM, where the story is one of client defections, big losses and plunging morale. Both organisations have nonetheless become a breeding ground for

festering discontent, naked ambition and rampant disloyalty.

Whether it was Mrs Horlick or, as she would have us believe, an unrelated group of disaffected rebels who were threatening to resign, the point to be derived from it all is much the same - when employees start holding a gun to an organisation's head, and find, moreover, that their bravado actually has the sought-after effect, then there has got to be something seriously wrong with the organisation.

Whatever the events that led up to her suspension, Mrs Horlick is perhaps the most striking evidence of this. Very few people, even in the City, earn £1m a year. Hardly any fund managers who do not actually own or are partners in their own businesses do. The notable exception is Tony Dye at PDM, who once made that sort of money though he surely doesn't any longer. And Carol Galley at Mercury Asset Management comes close. The others can probably be counted on the fingers of one hand.

So what on earth is Mrs Horlick, who was no more than number four in the pecking order, doing earning this astonishing amount? By all accounts Mrs Horlick is an exceptionally talented and clever young woman, but can she actually be worth that to any organisation? Somehow I doubt it. The fact that MGAM was apparently willing to pay it is evidence of a sickness in the

City that goes well beyond that of 20 Finsbury Circus (MGAM's City offices).

It's about the individual becoming greater than the organisation, the idea of the star employee without whom everything would collapse. That individuals should think and believe this is nothing new or surprising. But that their organisations should come to accept it too is a quite bizarre and extraordinary thing, a failure in management of the oldest and most basic variety. But then we don't need any reminders about management failure at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, do we?

Mrs Horlick was a fund manager, no more, no less, and her success, in so far as it could be measured, was built on the good name and systems of her organisation. Even on her own version of events, what happened is a pretty damning indictment of the modern City. Most management is filled with messy compromise but that an organisation can be held to ransom by any group of employees, and do things it doesn't necessarily want to do, is completely ridiculous. What Mrs Horlick claims happened, to put it a bit, is this. A group of rebels came to her and said that unless she got a position which would give her the authority to pull things back together again in the company, they would all leave. Mrs Horlick, you understand, was an entirely innocent pawn in all this.

So an emissary was dispatched to the boss, Robert Smith, with the message that if he didn't give her a decent job, then they would leave. What Mr Smith should have done was called their bluff, but weakened as MGAM was, it appeared to him that the rebels had the upper hand and he agreed. What happened after that will probably have to be left to the courts to decide. Why the sudden change of heart? Was it, as he claims, a subsequent telephone call in which he was told that Mrs Horlick had all along been planning to defect with the best of her team? Or is it, as Mrs Horlick claims, a question of being treated "despicably"?

Either way the impression is of an organisation in a quite spectacular state of shambles. Deliberate encouragement of the star employee system, what is more, seems to be the ultimate cause. The Nicola Horlick affair hardly bears comparison with the dreadful scandal that preceded it. But it is all the more surprising that an organisation which allows its employees to run amok in the manner of Peter Young should also suffer a tragicomic personnel crisis of this sort? And are star fund managers really what clients want these days? I've got my doubts about that too. It often helps on the retail side of the business to attach the name of a top performing fund manager group to a product, but there is growing disillusionment in the institutional market.

A fund manager who outperforms 4 per cent one year, achieving star status, isn't ultimately much good if he gives it all back the next. What the big pension funds increasingly demand is consistency and reliability. For that you need well-paid professionals, operating within strict investment guidelines and rules, but you don't necessarily need the likes of Mrs Horlick and her £1m pay packet.

That style of fund management will almost certainly persist, but in future it will probably belong more to the owner proprietor boutiques, to the investment gurus and the high-risk hedge funds. Young as she is, Mrs Horlick may in time come to be seen as a bit of an investment management dinosaur. Her demise could prove a watershed, unambiguously marking the final triumph of a reliable but boring computer-driven, number-crunching style of fund management.

As for MGAM, who knows what the damage might be? It is hard to know what the company's German masters, Deutsche Bank, made of Mrs Horlick's extraordinary flight to Frankfurt last night, complete with a whole entourage of reporters and photographers. But their belief in the City must be more than a little shaken. They must also be wondering what on earth it was they bought when they paid all that money for Morgan Grenfell seven years ago.

Wallace gets top job at C&W's cable arm

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Cable & Wireless yesterday filled the management gap at the top of its £5bn cable deal by appointing a director from Granada as chief executive of Cable & Wireless Communications, the new organisation formed out of the merger of its Mercury subsidiary with three cable operators.

Granada's Wallace, 48, is leaving his £320,000-a-year job as chief executive of Granada's restaurants and services division to take up the post, starting on 1 February. He will be paid a basic salary of £375,000 a year, with long and short-term bonuses and share options still being discussed with Dick Brown, C&W's chief executive.

Announcing the appointment, C&W again denied that the timetable for the merger, which involves Bell Cablemedia, the UK operations of Videotron and Nynex CableComms, had slipped. Mr Wallace said: "I've observed fairly closely from where I've been sitting and it's dead on track. This is not an issue. It's still set for the spring."

Mr Wallace joined Granada in 1986, rising to finance director three years later. By

1990 he was running the television rental business, taking over to manage the largest of Granada's operations, the restaurants arm, in 1995.

One of Mr Wallace's first tasks will be to sort out snags involved with the complex job of merging the four organisations. Insiders in the cable companies have complained of a damaging cultural gap, with the telephone-based Cable & Wireless often labelled as bureaucratic.

A senior cable source said yesterday: "Although he's not strong on the telecoms side that's a good sign for the industry. It sends the signal that it is not a typical telephone-based operation. He's also British and that's fantastic."

The appointment raises questions over the long-term role of Peter Howell-Davies, Mercury's chief executive. Last night Mr Howell-Davies confirmed he had been on the short-list for the C&W Communications job but welcomed Mr Wallace's appointment: "I'm personally disappointed at not getting the top job. I was a candidate and I'll continue to run Mercury and move the business forward."

The steering group overseeing the merger, which includes Mr Howell-Davies, Dan Summers, chairman of Bell Cablemedia, and John Killian, head of Nynex CableComms, will meet on Monday to assess progress. The next move is to speed up the search for the rest



Top guns: Graham Wallace (left) and Dick Brown announce the appointment. Photograph: John Voos

of the top executive team, with the aim of finalising the list by the end of the month. One hitch is that Stephen Pettit, the C&W director in overall charge of the steering group, is in hospital after a car crash last week.

Mr Wallace's move is the second top-level departure from Granada in a month. In

December Duncan Lewis quit as head of the group's media division after a row with chief executive Charles Allen. However Mr Wallace played down any suggestion that similar disagreements had led to his move. He is succeeded by Don Devorport, who runs Granada's roadside restaurant business.

PSBR 'on course to hit target'

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The Government insisted yesterday that its borrowing plans were on course to meet the Budget target despite a bigger-than-expected gap between spending and revenues last month, and the embarrassing admission that the Treasury had miscalculated by £400m the amount Budget increases in air passenger duty and insurance premium tax would raise next year.

The financial markets shrugged off the disappointing figures. Shares in London set another record, passing the 4,200 barrier, and the pound jumped more than two pence to its highest level since Black Wednesday.

The Treasury said the revision to the tax estimates applied only

to 1997/98, and made no difference to the medium-term policy. Although it would not spell out the explanation, analysts said the timing suggested officials had calculated the yield on the increase in air passenger duty from April, when it comes into effect only in November.

The increase from £5 to £10 for European flights and from £10 to £20 for other flights was now expected to bring in only £500m, rather than £800m, while higher insurance premium tax is expected to yield £1.1bn rather than £1.2bn.

The £400m shortfall represents a small fraction of total government revenues of around £260bn a year. But the low-key announcement contrasted with the Chancellor's insistence on clawing back the £1bn higher VAT on domestic light and

heat should have raised when he was defeated on this measure after the 1994 Budget.

The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement was £2.1bn in December, compared to £0.6bn in the same month a year earlier. The figure was higher than expected mainly because of a cluster of government interest payments on "strippable" gilts. The introduction of gilts whose coupon payments can be "stripped" is giving debt interest payments a strong seasonal pattern. The PSBR, excluding privatisation proceeds, stands at £20.4bn so far this year, well down from £23.6bn at the same stage last year. Government spending grew 3 per cent in the year to December.

Receipts grew faster than predicted. Although VAT receipts last month were 10 per

cent down on a year earlier, corporation tax revenues were 30 per cent higher.

Analysts said the PSBR was on track to hit the Budget target of £26.4bn. "We believe the Treasury was deliberately cautious in its PSBR forecast for the current financial year," said David Walton at Goldman Sachs. The crucial months for the full year total will be January and March. The former is one of the most important months for corporation tax. And departmental spending could display a traditional year-end surge.

The FTSE 100 index rose just over 10 points to end at 4,207.7. A surge in the US dollar thanks to favourable trade figures helped the pound rise more than two pence to close at DM2.6890, its highest since the ERM crisis.

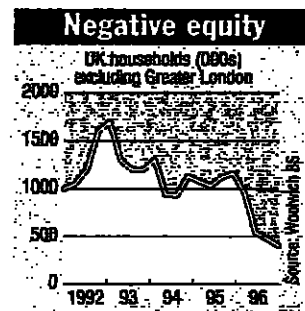
Houses move out of negative equity

The number of homeowners living under the shadow of negative equity dropped to 405,000 by the end of 1996, a drop of more than 750,000 over the year, according to Woolwich Building Society, writes Nic Cleeve.

The reduction, caused by rising house prices, brings the numbers of people in negative equity to the lowest levels since the first half of 1990, when the recession hit in earnest.

John Stewart, group chief executive at Woolwich, said yesterday: "The significant fall over the last year is good news for homeowners and is another sign that we are now experiencing a sustained recovery. Further rises of 5 to 6 per cent this year should remove more households from the negative equity trap."

Despite the rise in house prices, a core of about 250,000 hard-to-sell properties, mainly of those bought at the peak of



the boom in 1988, plus smaller studio-style flats, are unlikely to escape from the negative equity trap in 1997, Woolwich added.

Separately, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors said total output in Britain's construction industry is at its highest level since 1993. The construction workload grew by 2.4 per cent in the final quarter of 1996, the third consecutive quarterly rise.

IN BRIEF

• A consortium led by British Telecom and including Lockheed Martin, GEC Marconi unit GEC-Marconi Secure Systems and GPT Strategic Communications Systems has won a \$1.55bn (£928m) contract to provide an advanced national fixed telecommunications network for the UK armed forces. The Ministry of Defence awarded the contract to deliver voice, data, local area network (LAN) and other wide-area networking services for the Royal Navy, Air Force and Army for 10 years. The consortium will manage work currently undertaken by staff in some 1,200 military and civilian posts at about 600 defence establishments in the UK.

• The US trade deficit did not grow as much as expected in November, rising by only \$400m (£240m) to \$8.4bn. This followed an unexpected improvement in trade the previous month. Separate figures yesterday showed a strong 0.8 per cent rise in industrial output in December, and 5.1 per cent in the year to December. The manufacturing component was strong, growing by 1.1 per cent during the month. The capacity utilisation rate, closely monitored by the Federal Reserve, rose to 83.5 per cent, its highest all year. Several industries reported operating at above 90 per cent of capacity. Yesterday's statistics led economists to conclude that the growth rate picked up sharply in the final quarter of last year, almost certainly to an annual rate in excess of 4.5 per cent. The dollar soared in reaction to yesterday's figures, reaching DM1.6124, the highest level since June.

• Losses at the British Bloodstock Agency, which buys, sells, insures and transports horses on behalf of clients, narrowed to £123,000 from £146,000 in the seasonally weak six months to September. Most of the big horse sales, including Keeneland in the US and Tattersalls in the UK, take place in the autumn. The BBA noted increased confidence levels in the bloodstock industry and said both domestic and international sales had shown encouraging growth throughout 1996. Market expectations are for a full-year profit of £255,000 (£153,000).

• BOC Group expects 1997 "to be a year of solid underlying progress", while in 1998 and beyond "we expect an increased rate of growth as our new gas plants come on stream, and healthcare and vacuum return to higher levels of profitability," chief executive Danny Rosenkrantz said. He told BOC's annual general meeting that exchange rate movements "make it difficult to predict (1997) profit", describing the continuing rise of sterling against other currencies as "an added challenge".

• Orange is planning to go Dutch by joining a consortium to bid for the third telecoms licence in the Netherlands. Partners include Dutch bank ABN Amro and Germany's Deutsche Telekom.

• Storehouse, the BHS and Mothercare retail group, yesterday reported better than expected Christmas trading figures with "same business" sales 9 per cent ahead of last year. Like-for-like sales at BHS were 7.5 per cent ahead, but same store sales at Mothercare were 4 per cent below 1995.

Picking up windfalls on the high street

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

With most retailers having reported their Christmas trading statements - Marks & Spencer and Burton, which report next week, are the notable exceptions - the high street book on 1996 is gradually closing. Though there were clearly exceptions, it was generally a good year for retailers with Dixons even pinpointing the start of the recovery to a specific week in the spring. This was when the Tessa money started to flow and tax cuts from the previous Budget came into effect.

As the chart shows, it was around that time that the retail chain store sector started to outperform the rest of the market. The sector continued its outperformance until last autumn when it started to decline. The reason then was fears that interest rates had bottomed out and that increases were on the horizon.

Investors will now be focusing on the prospects for the sector in 1997 and which stocks will prove the pick of the crop.

Most analysts are saying that 1997 will prove another good year for retailers thanks to rising consumer spending and the added factor of building society windfalls. Set against this is the prospect of rising interest rates which could dampen the celebrations considerably.

Sectors that should reap the most handsome rewards from 1997's windfall gains are likely to be the same ones which came top of the pile last year: DIY retailers, electricals and furnishings.

These will be boosted not just by consumers' propensity to buy big ticket items after their building society windfalls but also the improvements in the housing market. On that basis Dixons looks good

value as the dominant player in electrical retailing. It should also benefit from the March launch of the new Nintendo machine, which is set to become the "must have" computer hardware of the year.

In furniture MFI has already performed strongly but could enjoy a further re-rating in 1997. Other stocks which should also benefit. That means Kingfisher, which owns B&Q as well as Comet. Items such as carpets and beds should also do well, though shares in some retailers in this market, such as Carpetright, are already expensive.

But as the stock market typically looks around 18 months ahead, investors need to be aware of the trends not just for 1997 but for 1998 as well. That year is likely to prove much tougher for retailers as the building society windfalls fade away. And even if more societies do take the flotation route, the largest players such as Halifax and Woolwich will have been

for-like sales income and a recovery in petrol margins.

Nick Bubb of brokers MeesPierson has chosen Somerfield as his share of the year and analysts are predicting good things from other supermarket groups. We will learn more from the supermarkets next week with results from Budgens and Somerfield and trading statements from Tesco and Sainsbury.

The value of Clyde Petroleum

The tempo of the Gulf Canada bid for Clyde Petroleum increased this week as both sides engaged in a brave attempt to interest investors in the arcane mysteries of oil company valuation. For those of an anorak tendency, the methodological details have a kind of dour fascination but it is hard to escape the conclusion that the facts being marshalled by bidder and target alike are more than usually selective.

Simple things first. Clyde would appear to have essentially given up hope of remaining independent. Half way through the 60-day bid timetable, the dispute has boiled down to price. Either Gulf will convince investors that its 105p tabled offer is full and generous, or it will up its offer, or a third party will ride over the horizon on a white charger.

As for the details, Clyde should be valued as UK oil companies always have been, relative to its underlying net asset value, essentially the net present value of the expected cash flows from the assets it owns. With analysts'

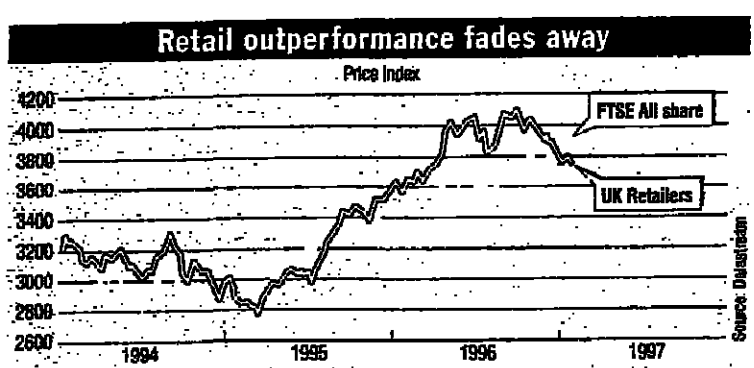
estimates for that between 70p and 80p, Gulf claims its 105p represents a sizeable premium for control. If Clyde thinks it is worth so much more, asks Gulf, why have its directors sold more than 450,000 shares in the past year at prices between 63p and 81p?

Clyde claims it is not like most small UK exploration stocks, long on hope value but short on real revenues: it is more akin to small US oil producers, with reliable, predictable production, and should be valued on the US model which is a multiple of historic cashflows.

Getting a US oil consultant to put its name to a suggested range of multiples (5.3 to 6.4 times), Clyde calculates a fair value, on the basis of 1996's 27.6p cash flow, of between 146p and 177p. Chip in a premium for control, Clyde says, and we might think about it. By the way, our directors had more shares at the end of 1996 than at the beginning despite the sales.

Clyde now has 10 days more before day 39 of the bid timetable, which is the last date it can furnish new information to shareholders. Gulf then has a further week to come up with a final offer, which will remain open for another two weeks during which a white knight may emerge.

Key to the outcome will be whether or not Clyde comes up in the next 10 days with an independent assessment of the value of its assets - essentially playing the game according to Gulf's rules. If it can secure a high enough figure, Gulf will be more or less forced to up the ante. If it can't, or chooses not to publicise the figure, then Gulf might have an argument that Clyde's cashflow approach is too optimistic. Whichever, with the shares at a high of 123p, there is time to wait and watch.

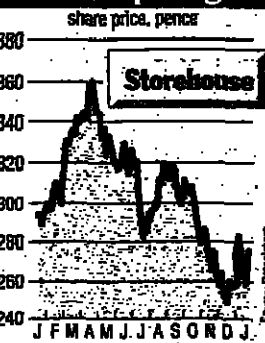


market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100	4207.7	+10.2
FTSE 250	4583.4	+17.5
FTSE 350	2087.7	+5.7
SEAQ VOLUME	1.2bn shares,	
	54,117 bargains	
Gilts Index	n/a	

Share spotlight



Second liners reach new peaks as Footsie passes 4,200

Taking Stock

After much huffing and puffing Footsie broke through the 4,200 points barrier. In busy trading it overcame a minor bout of indigestion around lunch time to close 10.2 higher at 4,207.7.

New York's continuing strength helped, so did the interest rate standstill.

But influences closely related to the stock market were important. One was the smoothness of the big Guinness sale when Goldman Sachs encountered not the slightest difficulty placing the 135 million shares the French luxury goods group LVMH decided to unload. Another was the unremarkable expiry of the January Footsie options.

The possibility of the Guinness placing has for long hovered. The market was convinced LVMH, despite the weakness of the drink giant's shares, was keen to cash in at least some of its chips. In the

event Goldman took the shares from LVMH, placing them with institutions and Guinness which paid 414p for 44 million (2.3 per cent of its capital). LVMH, once owning 24 per cent of Guinness, is left with 14.2 per cent and, it is suspected, will sell more stock when it is allowed to do so. Guinness fell 4p to 432p, just 2p above its year's low.

There had been uneasy feelings in some quarters about the Footsie expiry. It is not unknown for volatile trading to occur near settlement time as large investment houses struggle to protect their positions. But this time round the expiry attracted little attention.

It was not only blue chips which were in record breaking form. Second and third liners were for once at the forefront of the advance with the FTSE 250 index at last hitting a new peak, up 17.5 to 4,583.4. The supporting index has lagged as



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Footsie established a string of record highs. The last FTSE 250 peak was hit in April.

Supporting shares made a good start to last year. But they tended to drift for much of the time after April's high.

The strong opening 1997 performance will bring relief to many bulls. There is a strong belief the first few weeks of the year set the pattern for the rest of the 12 months. Even so, many observers are pointing to a correction, perhaps even a ragged retreat, before the spring.

New York despite the rhetoric of the gloom merchants, continues to defy gravity and during London

opening shares were riding at new highs.

NatWest Securities expect Footsie to trade in the 3,800 to 4,200 range in the first half year-end.

The string of festive trading statements continued with Storehouse, under pressure lately following negative comments, gaining 17.5p to 275p. Blacks Leisure's trading statement lifted the shares 16.5p to a 401.5p peak. MeesPierson raised its profits forecast from £9.25m to £10m.

Hanson, again heavily traded, rose 3p to 92p and building materials group Redland continued to recover as

the likes of Barclays de Zoete Wedd, Panmure Gordon and HSBC James Capel decided it was over sold. The shares rose 8.5p to 342.5p.

The P&O shipping group was less fortunate. UBS downgraded its profit estimates from £410m to £375m and moved its stance from buy to hold; the shares sunk 18p to 624p.

The strictures of the industry regulator shunted Railtrack into the sidelines, down 15p to 398.5p. Prism Rail again moved ahead on the buzz it had won another franchise: the shares rose 50p to 580p.

Dividend cut fears lowered Lucas Varley 4.5p to 216p and, like Guinness, Allied Domecq and Grand Metropolitan wilted in the face of sterling's strength.

Biocompatibles International, the health group, moved further ahead, up 42.5p to 905p. There is talk of a deal

with Glaxo Wellcome and Kleinwort Benson is known to be positive.

SR Gent, the clothing group, fell 6p to 35.5p as the market grew tired of waiting for the signalled bid. The shares were above 60p last month. A warning of up to a £1m loss slashed Multimeda 16.5p to 18.5p and a profit warning from Corporate Executive, which came to market in November, cut the shares 1.25p to 2.75p.

Ask Central, the restaurant chain jumped 25p to 187.5p, a peak. The Kaye family, which has established a number of successful eating out concepts, has a major interest.

SkyNet, raising £1.7m through a rights issue, returned to Ofex. The shares closed at 50p with the nil paid rights at 1p. The car security group was suspended when a move to AIM collapsed. The SFA is investigating trading in its shares.

QVero, a maker of bits and pieces for telephones, has experienced a crossed line since its interim figures showed growth slowing. The shares hit 171.5p, against a 220p flotation in November, 1995. They struggled last year, up 11.5p to 185p, on vague talk trading last year was a little better than expected. The group should, it is thought, be reaping rewards from its links with Ericsson, its biggest client. Profits have been forecast at £13.6m.

William Nash, a property and wallpaper group, held at 190p. Stockbroker Beeson Gregory believes on a sum-of-the-parts valuation Nash shares are worth 296p and, suggests analyst Antony Legge, the market price should be around 240p. Profits for last year are forecast at £2.9m with £3.1m this year.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex-rights: Ex-dividend: Ex all at Unlisted Securities Market: A Suspended: po: Paddy Paid: ni: Nil Paid: Shares: % AIM Stock: Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 333, and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 123 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Real-time	00	Starting Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
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Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41

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Property

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Telecommunications

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Textiles & Apparel

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Tobacco

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Transport

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Water

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Support Services

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Adlon	200.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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صكيات الاميل

	Spot
	06280
	05407
	09000
6	33747
	872.750
	73.600
	05139
7	206228
	3.8005
	11235
	0.3829
	3.8750
2	83.4940
	4.3587
	0.8637
	0.8065
	4.8597
	1.5593
	0.8838
	2.9553
	0.8815

	Dollar
	79.4700
	0.3850
	400.799
	26.3250
	5.6875
	38.420
	576.000
	4.8835
	273.400
	3.6735

Quoted Low to High
 other firms.

10 yr	yield %
60%	5.55
8.80%	6.66
9 1/4%	7.28
7%	5.78
6.6%	6.54

1 Year	Open interest
6 1/4	144048
6 1/2	224227
5.51	88267
4 1/4	21/2

40	180934
62	100168
50	64569
0	n/a
70	42154
70	19552
53	10496
38	5290
71	80292
82	5480

Call/Put
Total/vote

	chg
+	1750
-	20
+	200
-	425
-	534
-	250
-	1675

is & change in
Tue 14 Jan '87

\$	F
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360/371	215/225
360/377	215/225
Source: Spine & Soe	
Potatoes	
ATA	£/tonne
Feb	22.80
Apr	23.50
Vol:	102
1,230 Poles	
nts/bushel	
	Sold
	27.150
	27.125
	27.150

00kg	9700
tonne	772.50
onne	525.00
00kg	8750
onne	880.00
Europe	
(\$/tonne)	
West Europe	
	218/27
	222/224
	238/230
	104/106
70pence	

33.88	+18.79
71.75	-12.78
80.70	+39.92
81.43	-2.08
77.79	+6.69
0750	-71.48

as of 18 Jan 97

Bld	Md	Other
8881	5713	7042
	109180	
	70260	
00375		10886
0032		8844

122.1	161.3
129.5	188.3
158.0	188.3
177.4	189.8
194.70	183.90
187.35	176.15
158.47	165.4
138.6	166.5
138.3	135.0
148.5	136.7
162.7	173.4
164.3	188.7
188	209.8
202.2	218.2
249.7	288.2
334.7	363.9
344.2	330.5
347.8	368.2
271.4	285.7
183.2	263.5
143.8	

2012	2218
1710	1801
4548	4788
9630	9085
7587	1272
8561	8812
1801	2886
3011	3120
8538	9514
0708	1127
1501	
124	
5534	6984
4837	4881
4538	4777
2715	2859
3413	3583

sport

SCOTLAND v WALES

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP

IRELAND v FRANCE

Wainwright's dual campaign begins

Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWETT
reports from Edinburgh

Rob Wainwright has said all the right things in all the right places as Scotland's captain during the build-up to this afternoon's Five Nations' Championship skirmish between Scotland and Wales at Murrayfield, diplomatically balancing his sympathy for the absent Kevin McKenzie with some positive support for the hooker's much criticised replacement, Graham Ellis. He has also avoided being drawn into the Lions' trap. Lions? Never heard of them.

Not even Wainwright can expect to get away with that one for too much longer, though. A strong performance in Edinburgh today will establish him as the clear front-runner for the biggest honour in the British game: the Lions captaincy in South Africa this summer. Whether he likes it or lumps it, the army doctor from Perth will be playing for more than national pride over the next two and a half months.

"As far as I'm concerned, the 15 Scotsmen facing Wales will be totally focused on one thing and one thing only - representing their country and making sure of victory," he said yesterday. Yes, and Mike Tyson is taking up ballet.

Provided Wainwright stays fit - today's appearance is only his fifth since undergoing surgery on troublesome groin

and Achilles problems last autumn - the only way he will not claim a seat on the plane to Johannesburg is if his employers decide to stick him on a flight to Sarajevo instead. He admitted yesterday that a summer tour of duty in Bosnia was a possibility, adding: "The Army are my main employers - I'm a semi-professional rugby player, not a full-timer - and if they want to send me somewhere, I'm at their beck and call."

For all that, Fran Cotton and his fellow Lions selectors will be taking a deep interest in the versatile loose forward's performance against the Welsh. At this stage, Wainwright's most obvious rival for top spot in Springbok land is Jason Leonard, the England prop and vice-captain, with Martin Johnson, the England lock, in the stalls as a dark horse despite his lack of leadership experience.

While Wainwright was playing down any talk of bigger and better things, Craig Chalmers felt able to put this afternoon's intriguing tussle into a more realistic Lions perspective. "The tour is something that will be on the minds of most of the players in the Five Nations," said Scotland's outside-half, who wins his 50th cap. "If it's not, I'll be deeply surprised. After all, it's the pinnacle."

The Five Nations matches are, in a way, trials for the Lions and I've been around long enough to know that any Scot not fully tuned in against Wales will not be going to South Africa."

Chalmers will be more tuned in than most today. Uncomfortably aware of the fact that many Scots consider Gregor Townsend to be the best stand-off in the country - Townsend, passed fit after Wednesday's neck strain alarm, plays in the centre - the Melrose linchpin needs to be at his most creative if the selectors' bold attacking policy is to bear fruit. But as he admitted yesterday: "Much depends on the kind of ball provided by the pack."

There lies the rub for the Scots. McKenzie's worryingly serious neck injury, diagnosed as a slipped disc requiring urgent surgery if it is not to damage the spinal cord, deprives the home side of their most ebullient and competitive forward; the Welsh, confident of their scrummaging strength and equipped, on paper at least, to squeeze their opponents in the close exchanges, were not exactly distraught at the prospect of facing a booker and a tight-head prop with one cap between them.

Wainwright was quick to commiserate with McKenzie, who will miss the rest of the season, but was even more keen to make Ellis, the 31-year-old Currie hooker, feel at home on the eve of his big day. "It's disappointing to lose Kevin, but Graham is every bit as committed a player and every bit as big a character," he said.

Ellis received similar support from a more unexpected source, erstwhile team-mate and sparring partner Damian Cronin. The pair fell out to such an extent during a training session on last summer's tour of New Zealand that they ended up throwing punches at each other. "I know how hard Graham has worked to get this chance and I'm sure he'll do well," said Cronin, a model of tact despite being dropped for today's game.

The Scottish pack cannot afford the time to indulge in any handbag swinging this afternoon. Pace will be of the essence for Wainwright's men; unless they can stretch their heavier opponents from one side of Murrayfield to another, last year's Grand Slam challengers could see this season's campaign falter at the first hurdle.



Arwel Thomas: Unpredictability is his strength according to the Welsh coach, Kevin Bowring

Photograph: David Ashdown

Thomas out to end the doubting

The sorcerer's apprentice takes centre stage in Edinburgh this afternoon, an elfin figure armed with an infinite repertoire of rugby trickery and an almost pious belief in the mystical qualities of the Welsh No 10 shirt. By the time the dust has settled on the Five Nations battle-ground of Murrayfield, we will know whether Arwel Thomas is a magician or an illusion.

Thomas, just turned 22 but far older than he looks, has split Red Dragon rugby down the middle. For every believer who considers him to be a glorious throwback to the grand tradition of Carwyn, Dai, Barry, Phil and Jonathan - legendary Welsh stand-offs are only ever referred to by their christian names - there is an agnostic who remains resolutely unconvinced.

His burden is made all the heavier by the fact that the sorcerer himself, Jonathan Davies, is back in the national squad and itching to play. Indeed, the 34-year-old maestro will be watching his young rival from the bench today, a startling role reversal that has led the more pragmatic Welsh followers to question the sanity of their national selectors.

But the Welsh coach, Kevin Bowring, is Thomas's staunchest ally. The engagingly polite and scholarly tactician

introduced the vulnerable little rookie from Trebanos - 5ft 8in, 10½st dripping wet - to test rugby last season, watching him illuminate Twickenham with deeds of rare audacity in the tight struggle with England before disappearing into a pit of angst-ridden indecision in Dublin. Now, 10 months on, Bowring is gambling his reputation on a hunch that his protégé's rehabilitation is complete.

He just may have backed a winner. Seven caps into his international career, Thomas is so self-assured, so completely at ease with the unique demands of his uniquely pressurised position, that it is hard to believe any of his illustrious predecessors were better equipped in the attitude department.

"The way I see it, I'm in the side to play my natural game," he says, acutely aware that there are legends of Welsh supporters who would prefer less imagination and more perspiration from their playmaker-in-chief.

"Obviously, any stand-off at this level has to be aware of the general game-plan and the various set moves incorporated within it, but Kevin has made it clear to me and everyone else why he wants me involved; he sees my unpredictability as my strength and he wants me to make things happen, play it off the cuff."

Chris Hewett meets a Welsh stand-off hoping to establish himself as the latest in an illustrious line

"To be honest, no one has ever tried to inhibit me or put the block on the way I play and if they did, I probably wouldn't take a blind bit of notice. That is not me being arrogant or big-headed - no one knows it all and I value advice - but I have never seen rugby as a treadmill. I do it for the enjoyment, the thrill

'I thought I knew what being No 10 involved - looking back I realise I wasn't prepared'

of it. Besides, you have to create something with the ball in today's rugby because defences are so well organised. "You can't work out everything on a blackboard. Scott Gibbs scored a cracking try against the United States last weekend from a pass of mine which, if truth be told, was pretty awful. It was down around his knees somewhere.

but he had the hands to take it and the whole chain of events caught the Americans on the wrong foot."

To be sure, Thomas personifies the art of rugby far more than the science of it and that purist approach will almost certainly give the travelling legions of Welshmen a severe dose of the jitters today. He knows from bitter experience that in the eyes of the public, risks are worth taking only when they work; but then, he realised early that the stress of the win-or-bust approach went with the territory.

"I always wanted to play outside-half for Wales, right from a little boy, and I knew from the start that the shirt carried a great tradition with pressures and expectations to match. I thought I knew what being No 10 entailed, but looking back on last season's Five Nations now, I realise I wasn't as prepared as I thought I was, either on or off the pitch."

"Suddenly, there were a million interviews to do. Suddenly, I had television cameras following me to college. When you're not used to that level of exposure, it hits you hard. You end up not knowing which way to turn."

At that point, Thomas was playing for Bristol in the English First Division and living away from home for the first time. Now, he is back in west

Wales with his parents - "great cooking," he smiles - and enjoying a purple patch with his new club, Swansea. "I'm more settled now, more prepared for whatever the next few months throw at me."

"I don't regret my time at Bristol for a moment, though. I owe them for the fact that I won my first caps from the Memorial Ground and a season in the Courage League was important experience. It was instructive to face the Guscotts and Carlings of this world, get up close to them and discover that, yes, I could catch even players of their quality on the hop if I got it right."

If he gets it right against Scotland, the long-promised Welsh renaissance will have a more realistic feel to it than at any point since the immediate aftermath of the 1987 World Cup.

"An away win in our first match would set everything up very nicely," he said this week. "A defeat would mean another wave of negative pressure, with the selectors being pressed to chop and change the team."

High stakes indeed. Given the fragile nervous disposition of a passionate rugby nation, it is just as well that Arwel Thomas feels more comfortable with those stakes than any of the thousands of red-scarved neurotics staring down from the stands.

Ashton confident of rekindling Irish fury

TERRY COOPER

reports from Dublin

Brian Ashton's chances of triumphing in his first game as the Ireland coach received a boost when the French centre Richard Dourthe withdrew with concussion on the eve of the Five Nations opener. He has been replaced by Stephane Glas, of the Bourgoin-Jallieu club.

It is a considerable blow to France given Dourthe's strengths as a penetrating centre and defender as well as goalkicker. The outside-half Thomas Castaignède will take over the kicking duties. However, it is worth remembering that in this fixture in Paris last year Glas came on as a replacement midway through the first half, and his partnership with Castaignède paved the way for France's 45-10 victory. Laurent Lefflamand, already in Ireland with the France A team, will take the vacant place on the bench.

Ireland, who won the Under-21 Triple Crown last season, were no match for the French in the first under-21 international played between the two countries at Donnybrook in Dublin yesterday. Losing 40-13.

The French outside-half Julien Berthe got his side away to a good start with a drop goal after three minutes and he then converted a try by centre Christophe Manas and added a penalty goal. For there on it was one-way traffic coming from the direction of Paris.

Wales achieved their 10th win at Under-21 level over Scotland since the series began in 1987, and with more careful finishing, might have established a bigger winning margin than the 24-13 they posted at Goldenacre yesterday. The Welsh outside-half Shaun Connor marked himself out as a player for the future with an impressive performance.

Ashton resigned as coach of the Courage League champions Bath a fortnight ago and was immediately snapped up as successor to Murray Kidd as coach of Ireland. Ashton led Bath to 10 trophies in the past seven years, but he has had his fair share of disappointments.

England lost twice in New Zealand in 1985 when he first took on his backroom coaching job. He was also in charge during England's unsuccessful Five Nations campaign in 1986, quitting after the 29-10 loss in Paris. "I could not see any way forward for England then," he said. "But I really can see a way forward for Ireland now. I would not have taken the job if I were not optimistic. I have been with Ireland for only a week of squad work in Limerick and Dublin, but I've established an excellent relationship with the players."

"We are convinced that we have an outstanding pack who can play a competitive game in

the important tight phases and in the loose. I hope to rekindle the Irish fury and fire and also to develop areas that the French will not be expecting."

"International rugby is all about getting the basics right, kicking your own goals and then doing something off the cuff that ambushes the opposition. Ireland have occasionally been good at those skills - notably when they beat England in 1993 and '94. We must ensure that Ireland do that regularly."

Jean-Claude Skrela, the French coach, says he will make

use of his entire squad if necessary after the withdrawal of Dourthe, the Dax centre, who was knocked out during training on Thursday. Since the introduction of tactical substitutions in November, coaches have dabbled in dragging players off the pitch. "A rugby team must now be regarded as 21 players and we will be pushing people on the pitch in the second half at relevant times," Skrela said.

Pierre Villepreux, who drifts as coaching guru between France and England, is back with his fellow countrymen demanding bet-

ter commitment. "France did not score a single try in losing to South Africa at the end of last year," he said. "Some players were shy of taking the responsibilities in attack and defence. We lost in France twice to the Springboks. If we are similarly tentative in away matches in the Five Nations, we could suffer."

Ireland have not beaten France anywhere since 1983. Dublin's faithful at Lansdowne Road today will be looking to their latest import for a change in the prevailing winds of Irish rugby.

Craig leads way for Scots

Scotland A 56
Emerging Wales 11

The wing James Craig scored three tries as Scotland A romped to victory over Emerging Wales in Edinburgh yesterday.

The West of Scotland speedster capitalised on shoddy

Welsh midfield play, twice intercepting passes and sprinting clear, and then rounding off a sweeping handling move.

More than 5,000 spectators packed into Heriot's Former Pupils' Goldenacre Ground, including a sizeable Welsh contingent who booed their side off the pitch. Despite fielding 10 full

internationals and receiving expert coaching from Mike Ruddock and Paul Turner, Wales were never in the game once Craig swooped for his opening score after 18 minutes.

Scotland A's outside-half Scott Welsh chipped in with 21 points from his boot, converting all six tries and adding three penalty goals.

Inspired by Craig's contribution, fellow wing Cameron Glasgow also blazed away for a first-half touchdown. Although the Wales outside-half Lee Jarvis kept the visitors in touch with two penalty goals, Scotland looked ready for a second-half onslaught when they reached the break leading by 17-6.

Senior caps Andy Nicol and Eric Peters, both of Bath, were prominent as further inroads were made deep into the Welsh defence. Craig completed his hat-trick with two tries in a six-minute spell before the Welsh supporters at last had something to cheer when the Llanelli lock Vernon Cooper ploughed over from close range.

Wales' occasional attacking glimpses were mainly provided by the young Llanelli wing Garan Evans, who also displayed courage when he returned to the pitch - his head bandaged - after being stamped on in a first-half ruck.

Scotland A's D. Lee, J. Craig, A. Fox, P. Rouse, C. Glasgow, S. Welsh, A. West, G. Grogan, S. Brown, P. Winger, S. Campbell, S. Davies, E. Peters, C. Hoeg, J. Scott, S. Holmes. Emerging Wales: J. Thomas, G. Evans, L. Davies, N. Davies, I. Scott, D. James, L. Jarvis, A. Moore, N. Eynon, R. McBryde, S. Jones, V. Cooper, P. Arnold, A. Cables, N. Thomas, C. Vinyatt.

Replacements: 16 R. McQuillan (Lansdowne), 17 D. Humphreys (London Irish), 18 S. Mawer (Glasgow), 19 G. Fothergill (Glasgow), 20 P. Flann (Blackburn), 21 A. Grier (Northampton).

IRELAND v FRANCE

at Lansdowne Road				
C O'Shea	London Irish	15	J-L Sadeury	Colomiers
J Topping	Ballymena	14	E Ntamak	Toulouse
M Field	Malone	13	S Glas	Bourgoin
J Bell	Northampton	12	T Castaignède	Toulouse
D Crofty	Garryowen	11	D Venditti	Brive
E Elwood	Lansdowne	10	A Pénaud	Brive
N Hogan	Tenure College	9	F Galthié	Colomiers
N Poplewell	Newcastle	8	C Califano	Toulouse
K Wood	Harlequins	7	M Dal Meso	Agen
P Wallace	Saracens	6	F Toumaire	Narbonne
P Johns	Saracens	5	O Merle	Montferand
J Davidson	London Irish	4	H Morin	Toulouse
D Corbary	Bristol	3	A Benazzi	Agen, capt
D McBride	Malone	2	P Benetton	Agen
E Miller	Leicester	1	F Pelous	Dax

Replacement: 16 R McQuillan (Lansdowne), 17 D Humphreys (London Irish), 18 S Meador (Garryowen), 19 P Pelous (Lansdowne), 20 J Flann (Blackrock), 21 A Gieker (Northampton).

Replacement: 18 L Lefauand (Bourgoin), 19 J Lefauand (Bourgoin), 20 M Carboneau (Bourgoin), 21 R Lefauand (Bourgoin), 22 J Jordana (Lansdowne), 23 R Benazzi (Agen).

McQuillan 20m

Replacements: 16 R. McQuillan (Lansdowne), 17 D. Humphreys (London Irish), 18 S. Mawer (Glasgow), 19 G. Fothergill (Glasgow), 20 P. Flann (Blackburn), 21 A. Grier (Northampton).

Reference: A Watson (South Africa) Kick-off: 3pm

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(Scotland's victory by 16-20pts: 10/1.)

SCOTLAND v WALES			
Murrayfield, kick off 3.00 pm. Live on BBC.			
BANDICAP BETTING			
10/11 SCOTLAND 10/11 WALES (44PTS) 14/1 TIE			
Forecast the score with Wales resulting a 4 point start.			
First Tryscorer			
5/1 E. Evans	4/1 Scotland win by 1-5 points		
5/1 J. Stanger	5/1 Scotland win by 6-10 points		
5/1 K. Logan	13/2 Scotland win by 11-15 points		
12/1 G. Thomas	18/1 Scotland win by 16-20 points		
12/1 G. Townsend	18/1 Scotland win by 21-25 points		
14/1 S. Gibbs	5/1 Wales win by 1-5 points		
16/1 C. Chalmers	7/1 Wales win by 6-10 points		
18/1 S. Hastings	11/1 Wales win by 11-15 points		
18/1 No Tryscorer	18/1 Wales win by 16-20 points		
IRELAND v FRANCE			
Lansdowne Road, kick off 3.00 pm.			
BANDICAP BETTING			
10/11 IRELAND 10/11 FRANCE (10PTS) 14/1 TIE			
Forecast the score with Ireland receiving a 10 point start.			
First Tryscorer			
5/1 E. N. Tammack	6/1 Ireland win by 1-5 points		
8/1 T. Castaignède	18/1 Ireland win by 6-10 points		
9/1 S. Glas	11/2 France win by 1-5 points		
12/1 J. L. Sado	4/1 France win by 6-10 points		
14/1 J. Topping	5/1 France win by 11-15 points		
20/1 J. Bell	7/1 France win by 16-20 points		

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Board puts end to country hopping

Rugby Union

Test players will be making a life-long decision at the start of the next century when they make their first appearance for their country. The International Board yesterday tightened up the eligibility regulations to ensure that once a player appears in a Test match or for his country's A team, he cannot

switch his allegiance to another nation. The move immediately scupper the hopes of François Pienaar, the former South Africa captain now playing for Saracens, who this week expressed a desire to play for England by satisfying the 36-month residency clause under current IB regulations. Any player now contemplating a switch will be unsuccessful

and the new rule becomes fully effective in January 2000.

Explaining the eligibility clampdown, the IB chairman Vernon Pugh said: "The issue was raised by Argentina's Carlos Izzi."

"It reflects his union's concern about the loss of leading players to other countries and the strong belief that representing one's country should be a choice for life."

"We will be drafting the new regulation in such a way that players who are now qualifying for another country and have been living in a new country for a significant length of time will still be able to complete the process."

"New Zealand felt that the development of Western Samoan and Fijian players who are waiting to play for New Zealand might be inhibited. But it is a balanced judgment."

"However, the South Sea Island nations will be delighted. They need to hurry their players into a Test or second team to nail them down for life."

The board have expanded the potential for advertising by allowing logos on the pitch and increasing the half-time interval from five to 10 minutes.

In addition, Test referees will be appointed on merit in future instead of the previous situation which was a rota system, while the principle of Lions' tours every four years was endorsed.

Pugh said the decision to have a 10-minute break at half-time "recognised the increased pace of the game that has come with revised laws and full-time professionalism." He added: "This and the pitch advertising were also dictated by commercial requirements."

The teams and match officials will be allowed to return to the dressing-room instead of having to stay on the pitch as at present.

The venue for the World Cup in 2003 will be decided early next year.

Critics, trips to the "sin bin" and the red and yellow card systems were also discussed. Experiments will continue before a firm policy is implemented next year.



Mary Pierce finds a novel way of making her mark with fans at Melbourne Park after winning her match at the Australian Open yesterday. Photograph: Reuter

Russell refuses to be beaten

Cricket

MARK BALDWIN
reports from Hamilton, NZ

Jack Russell has vowed to fight on against the "monotony" of being the England winter tour's forgotten man. Russell, condemned to almost total inactivity by England's decision to use Alec Stewart as wicket-keeper-batsman in the Test side, has played only three one-day matches during the 55-day old campaign in Zimbabwe and New Zealand.

Tomorrow he appears for his old club Tukapuna in an Auckland League fixture – a move designed to give Russell much needed match practice. And the Gloucestershire wicket-keeper does not rule out a further appearance for the club he played for in 1983-85 if his situation does not change later in the tour.

Russell said: "The only time in my cricket career that I have experienced such a long period of inactivity like this was during my very first England tour – to

Pakistan in 1987 – when I think I played one-and-a-half days' cricket in eight weeks."

"But I was a youngster then, learning my trade, and as you get older it gets harder to be on the sidelines. It has become a bit monotonous – it was great just to get out on to the field as a substitute fielder the other day in Palmerston North."

"There is only so much you can do with net after net, but I am still prepared to go through anything to get my England place back."

"I told Mike Atherton the other day that I will be there when England need me. The management all know what I can offer, even though they don't choose to use that at the moment."

"I'm in a position at the moment where you have two options – give up or fight on, and I am not prepared to give up yet."

Russell fired up his club match after confirming that he would not be playing in England's four-day game against Northern Districts here.

Dravid's patient climb

India 410
South Africa 0-0

Rahul Dravid notched his maiden Test century yesterday, completing nine hours of batting over two days to score 148 runs and power India to a first-innings total of 410 in the third Test against South Africa.

Dravid, 24, scored the fourth-highest individual total at the Wanderers Ground in Johannesburg as India started well in their bid to avoid a series sweep on South African soil. Dravid came on after an hour on the first day and lasted until the final delivery of the innings, a rising one from the South African captain Hansie Cronje which he stroked straight to Shaun Pollock.

Dravid had faced 362 deliveries and hit only 21 boundaries, using patience and control to increase his score over 540 minutes. The morning session yesterday was cancelled by rain, with play on the second day

starting in the early afternoon. Saurav Ganguly teamed with Dravid for a 145-run partnership and scored 73 runs himself, while Javagal Srinath contributed 41 and Anil Kumble, 29.

The South African openers Andrew Hudson and Gary Kirsten looked at two balls before umpires called play for the day due to poor light.

(Second day: India won toss)
INDIA – First innings
(Overseas) 233-3
V S Laxman c Richardson b Adams 121
R S Dravid c Pollock b Cronje 148
S R Tendulkar c McLennan b Cronje 36
S Ganguly c McLennan b Hudson 73
M Atherton c Hudson b Richardson 18
V V S Laxman not out 0
A Kumble c Richardson b Hudson 29
J Srinath c Hudson b Donald 41
D Ganga c Cronje b Donald 11
B A V Prasad not out 2
Extras (lb 15 nb 9 w 5) 29
Total 410-3
Fall of wickets: 4-245 5-256 6-327 7-403 8-408 9-410
Bowling: Donald 32.1-0-59-3 (with 10-0-0-0), Pollock 30.11-55-0-1 (with 10-0-0-0), Adams 21.5-4-50-0, Richardson 27.6-15-3 (with 10-0-0-0), Cronje 24.4-6-88-12, Cronje 10.5-5-20-0.

SOUTH AFRICA – First innings
(Overseas) 0-0
G Kirsten not out 0
Total (for no wicket) 0
To bat: A M Hudson, D J Cullinan, M J Grogan, B M MacLennan, S M Pollock, D J Richardson, L Hudson, A A Donald, P Adams
Bowling: India: Srinath 0.2-0-0-0.

Nines opportunity for Goulding

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

The withdrawal of Keiron Cunningham from the Great Britain squad for the World Nines in Townsville, Australia, has created an unexpected opportunity for his St Helens team-mate, Bobbie Goulding.

The Test booker has pulled out of this month's trip with a knee injury, leaving the squad's coach, Andy Gregory, needing a replacement from Saints, because of the restriction of one player per club.

Goulding is Gregory's first choice as a stand-in. He has played at hooker in the past and could certainly adapt to the role in a nine-a-side format. What is more doubtful is whether he is

in the right frame of mind for any type of rugby at the moment.

Saints' captain says he is determined to leave the club if they will not improve his contract, which has three years to run, and that he is to talk to other clubs next week. He has been linked with rugby union clubs, as well as league sides in Australia, but St Helens say they have had no approaches and that Goulding has not even asked them for a move.

The Great Britain captain, Andy Farrell, is hopeful of recovering from a stubborn thigh strain in time to fly out with the squad next Friday. The Bradford Bulls full-back, Stuart Spruce, has been given permission to follow the rest of the party three days later, as he is getting married next Saturday.

There will be a host of new faces on show tomorrow in a batch of pre-season friendlies. Vince Fawcett and Brett Goldspink are expected to play for Oldham in the last game at the Watersheddings, while their opponents, Swinton, have three New Zealanders – Marlon Gardner, Jason Walker and Gareth Adams – in line to make debuts.

Warrington and Salford will both field remodelled packs in the testimonial for Gary Sanderson at Wilderspool, and Leeds' recent signings – Dean Lawford, Ryan Sheridan and Anthony Farrell – will play against their former club when Sheffield Eagles visit Headingley.

The former Wigan full-back, Shaun Tyrer, is training with Leigh after being out of the game for two years because of a contract dispute with Whitehaven.

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sport

FOOTBALL: As Coventry City's manager prepares to face up to his old club and his old boss, Glenn Moore spoke to him about life at the bottom of the Premiership and his own particular recipe for success at Highfield Road

Strachan relaxing into his new role

"People wonder why someone like Roy Stewart has lasted so long, whether it's because he's changed his style or something. In fact it's because he works hard and is very good. That's why people last. That's why people are successful for a long time. There is no secret."

It could be so. Some talking about Gordon Strachan's longevity. It is actually Strachan talking about Manchester United's consistency. Strachan, who graced Old Trafford from 1984 to 1989, hosts his old club today as manager of Coventry City.

There is no danger of sentiment clouding his approach to the task. "I'm not concerned with what they [United's supporters] think of me now, only what they think of me at Coventry," he said yesterday.

Strachan's ability to focus on what is important is one of the reasons he is still able to play in the Premiership a month short of his 40th birthday. Alex Ferguson once described him as "a winner" and asked how he would like his teams to play. Strachan answers simply "winning". "I handle defeat badly," he said. "When I hurt, I hurt badly

'I handle defeat badly. When I hurt, I hurt badly and it's there on my face for everyone to see'

and it shows on my face for everyone to see."

Ferguson, the man who sold him twice, flung tea-cups at him, and admired him. Said of Strachan: "He's only a diminutive guy but what a character. A strong man of a different kind. Good game or bad the bottom line was that he always wanted the ball. Exactly the mental courage I appreciate. In fact, I demand it."

Yesterday Strachan was not in the mood to talk about Ferguson. Maybe he was not in the mood after a dozen similar requests this week: maybe his Old Trafford exit, within days of a disappointing performance in an FA Cup quarter-final defeat, still rankles. He had told the *Independent* two years ago that "we didn't dislike each other but I wouldn't say we got on well."

He did, however, tell the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*: "He is up there with all the greats. Not just for what he has done for Manchester United but for what he has achieved at Aberdeen and St Mirren as well. Some people get burned out, but Alex loves it and keeps going. What he has achieved is phenomenal. His self-motivation is phenomenal."

Ferguson is one of only six club managers Strachan has played under in a glittering 22-year career - less



Gordon Strachan: The worries of management are evident as he watches his players in training yesterday, but he is determined to achieve consistency Photograph: Peter Jay

than Paul Dickov has had at Arsenal and Manchester City this season. The significant others were Howard Wilkinson at Leeds - "they could not have picked a better man to be technical director" - Ron Atkinson, who signed him for Manchester United and Coventry, and his first manager at Dundee, David White.

Atkinson is still around having been "promoted" to director of football when Strachan took over as manager in November. "I see the Big Man quite a lot, he's in every second day. We talk about players and different things. It's handy to have someone to bounce ideas off. He's quite involved."

"It is hard to say who's influenced me and how. The football and tactics when I set out are no longer relevant. It is just me really. The personality I project to players is me. If you try and be something else they will see through it."

"There are good days and there are days when you think there must

be something better to do. On the whole it [management] is challenging, stimulating, interesting."

Strachan has said that if the strain of managing becomes too much he will walk away. "My family comes first and foremost, football a long, long way behind. I can understand why Kenny Dalglish and Kevin Keegan left."

"You never entirely switch off, your mind is ticking about this player, that player, somebody's problems. You cannot analyse everything in the game or listen to all the advice people want to throw at you. If you did that it would screw you up. It would literally send you up the wall."

"If you get totally involved with

something else it's nice, but if you start day-dreaming you find you are day-dreaming about football."

"I switch off by sitting in the house watching telly. I watch all the garbage, *Family Fortunes*, things like that. That can really switch you off from football."

Strachan, 40 next month, appears to have taken the opportunity of picking the team to retire again and his appearances now are very rare. "It's wonderful, I can wake up in the morning without the aches. But I'm still involved. I played for the reserves on Thursday."

Adam Dent, who covers Coventry City for the *Evening Telegraph*, said of Strachan: "He seems to have changed, he is so laid back. He used to jump up and down a lot. He's been good to work with."

He has also done well after a difficult start. His first match was a home defeat in the Coca-Cola Cup to Endleigh League Second Division strugglers Gillingham. "Not the ideal start," he admitted.

Having taken over with Coventry in the bottom three they then took one point from four Premiership games to go bottom. However, four successive victories carried

'We're going well considering we're playing with 10 men for most of the games'

them to mid-table before a home draw with Sunderland and last week's 4-0 loss at Blackburn halted the surge. Dion Dublin was sent off in both matches.

"We're going well considering we are playing with 10 men most of the games," Strachan said. "Once we get back to 11 I'm sure we'll be better. I've changed one of two things and steadied the ship a little."

Dent adds: "He's changed the defence, except for Blackburn last week when he admitted he'd made a mistake by reverting to four. Playing Dublin there was a masterstroke and Paul Williams has been switched back to midfield to be a 'minder' for Gary McAllister which has helped."

"The other good move was signing Darren Huckerby which has injected pace into the attack. He's done well as manager. I think supporters have been pleasantly surprised."

We have got this far without mentioning Strachan's famous dietary habits: bananas, porridge, seaweed pills, etc. Has he got the whole squad eating it now?

"The food at the training ground got changed dramatically when I first came here as assistant manager," Strachan said. "They don't have to eat it - they can eat or go hungry."

No 201

Ipswich Town

FAN'S EYE VIEW

by Mike Baker

Portman Road still holds one of the quietest and most stoical crowds around. They trudge in from Suffolk's market towns, arriving just minutes before kick-off, and leave early to beat the traffic. In between, they stand either silently appreciative or wearily resigned. Football may be more important than religion at some grounds, but at Portman Road it ranks somewhere behind the state of the weather and the price of the car park.

This may be a response to the inconsistent form of George Burley's young team as the club tries to get used to life outside the Premiership. But Ipswich fans have never been a noisy lot. Even in the hooligan days of the 1970s, visiting fans used to say you could take the wife and a picnic to Ipswich's North Stand.

I went to Portman Road in the Division Two championship season of 1967-68. My only experience of football crowds had been standing on the wooden terracing at Colchester United's Layer Road, and to this wide-eyed 11-year-old the Ipswich crowd seemed noisy enough. But when I moved away and watched football elsewhere, I realised how underemotional, fatalistic and phlegmatic Ipswich fans were.

Now I am a supporter-in-exile living in London. On my last visit to Portman Road they denied Crystal Palace's promotion hopes with a 3-1 win. Yet I had heard more singing and chanting at Chelsea reserves. My daughter, London-born and showing an alarming leaning towards Wimbledon, was attending her first Ipswich match. Even she was puzzled by the silence and kept asking me whether there was a club song.

You cannot have it all ways, though, and I am rather proud

of Ipswich for being a bit different. Passion may be lacking but so too are aggression and violence. They might mutter a bit when things are not going well, but Ipswich fans don't yell for their manager's head as soon as they go a goal down.

That could also be because Ipswich is an island of sanity in an increasingly money-dominated game. Suffolk people are sensible with that folding stuff and would not stand for the inflated prices I endure in London. I paid £28 for an ordinary ticket at Tottenham recently. At Ipswich I bought four for the same price. OK, so two were for children and one for a pensioner, but even allowing for the difference between the Premiership and the First Division, that is a huge gap. No wonder Spurs supporters cannot afford to leave the ground early.

In the big-money world of modern football, Ipswich may never make it back to the top. Along with other clubs like Norwich and QPR, Ipswich landed on the wrong side of the financial gap as the Premiership pulled away from the rest.

Yet George Burley is building a team in the slow, steady Ipswich way. It is still one of the few clubs that allows its managers time to build success. It works too. Which other club has produced two England managers of the likes of Sir Alf Ramsey and Bobby Robson?

As befits one of the best over-lapping full-backs of his day, Burley has created a team that builds their attacks from the wide defensive skills of Mauricio Tarrico and Gus Uhlenbeck. The midfield does not yet have the vision of past Ipswich stars like Muhren, Talbot and Thijssen, or my own personal favourite Colin Viljoen, but Geraint Williams sometimes shows a touch of class from those glorious days.

MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

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Moore spoke
Highfield Road
role

Sir John Hall's dream of winning the championship with a team of Geordies (and an honorary Geordie at the helm) is unrealistic

The voice of the Geordie lass stuck out like a sore thumb among the crowd of well-wishers who assembled early outside the gates of St James' Park on Wednesday evening. "Gutted, I am," she admitted. "He walked out on two clubs, who's to say he won't do the same to us. We need a Geordie as our manager, not an outsider."

She'd got the facts wrong, as the man of the moment had explained, tersely, at the previous day's press conference. But her sentiments left us in no doubt as to the nature of the Geordie's crime: he is not, and could never be, a Geordie. And to some Geordies, that simply won't do.

Keegan, of course, was different. He was already accepted as a Geordie when he arrived to rescue the club from oblivion in 1991. However, the issue highlights a trend which seems to have developed, particularly in

Newcastle, and even more so since Alan Shearer "came home" amid more hype than is afforded a royal wedding, which suggests that when players and managers are concerned, home is where the heart is.

Those of us whose roots are a little more blurred round the edges than the average Geordie know this isn't true. Did David Beckham care that his double-whammy against Spurs was akin to plunging the knife in and twisting it? Did he hell. Yet Beckham was born in Leytonstone, just a long ball from White Hart Lane, trained with the club before winning a trip to a Bobby Charlton football school and falling for Manchester United, and has a grandfather who's a Spurs season ticket holder. Kicking his boyhood club in the teeth and out of the FA Cup didn't seem to bother him.

Maybe it's something unique about Geordies, because it certainly weighed heavy on Graham Fenton's conscience when he scored those two late Blackburn goals against Newcastle last season.

The reality is that Sir John Hall's dream of winning the championship with a team of Geordies (and an honorary Geordie at the helm) is romantic - but unrealistic.

There's no reason why Bobby Robson, John Toshack, Peter Beardsley, Chris Waddle, Brian Little or Jimmy Nail or any other Geordie should have better credentials than Dalglis. Waddle (who was linked with the job "only because I'm a Geordie who did well there") says: "A board often looks to appoint someone with connections 'cos it's popular with the fans but they've really got no advantage over an out-

Olivia Blair



ON SATURDAY

sider: in fact people can expect too much from the return of a prodigal son." Brian Little, Harry Redknapp, Joe Royle, Stuart Pearce and Trevor Francis are among those who have returned to their roots - adopted or otherwise - and who carry the ac-

companying burden of expectation. Now Steve Bruce has been mooted as a possible replacement for Alex Ferguson, although he'll have Bryan Robson to contend with first.

Likewise, it's naive to think that a team of Geordies would fare better than a mixed bag of players. Even if they did, the migration of players from club to club is too great to establish any notion of "the home-town team."

For a start, the scouting network is too top heavy; while big clubs can afford to scout scouts far and wide, smaller clubs have to rely on their scraps. How else do you explain how Brummie Marlon Brown, young sweeper extraordinaire, ended up at Blackburn? How Nuneaton-born John Curtis, tipped as a future England captain, found his way to Manchester United, and how Shearer himself was 26 before he went home?

Wimbledon have the highest proportion of home-grown players among Premiership clubs, which betrays their more humble origins. The Dons have had to rely on a thriving youth system; not for Joe Kinnear a luxury of a bottomless pit of pounds.

It's really fans who support their home-town club through thick and thin who would like players to show loyalty, but fans are not always kind to their returning heroes. Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, recalls being appalled at the reception given to a player who returned with his new club to the scene of former crimes. But perhaps West Ham can boast a greater sense of loyalty than most clubs, having been brought up on players like Billy Bonds and Trevor Brooking. Brooking, who played 17 seasons in claret and blue, says: "The gulf in wages

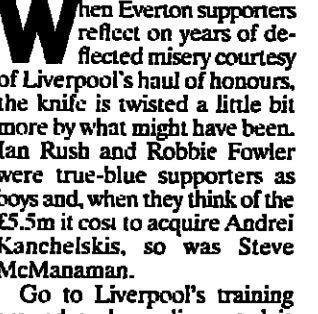
between clubs wasn't so big then so the biggest criteria was enjoying your football, and loving the club." But players like Brooking, Celtic's Paul McStay and Portsmouth's Alan Knight remain the exceptions; most players will play for whoever pays them.

Should we blame them? After all, to them it's a job, not a matter of life or death (even if the hype surrounding Keegan's departure contradicts that). It's that kind of pragmatism that explains how Dalglis could ruthlessly tear down his Rangers posters when the Celtic scouts came knocking. And if a true Bluese like Dalglis can make a success out of playing for Celtic, he can make a success out of anything. So that last need have no worries: Newcastle have got the right man. Even if he isn't a Geordie.

True blue Owen is a natural Red

NEW FACES FOR '97

Guy Hodgson on a striking Liverpool prodigy who could match the achievements of Hunt, Rush and Fowler



Michael Owen: Given a first-team squad number for Christmas

When Everton supporters reflect on years of deflected misery courtesy of Liverpool's haul of honours, the knife is twisted a little bit more by what might have been. Ian Rush and Robbie Fowler were true-blue supporters as boys and, when they think of the £2.5m it cost to acquire Andrei Kanchelskis, so was Steve McManaman.

Go to Liverpool's training ground and an alien word is heard. When McManaman rises to head a ball he uses a name that is not Hunt, Toshack or Keegan but "Latchford" - Bob of Everton and England fame. He is harking to a schoolboy dream while casting embarrassment on the Goodison scouting system.

Rush, Fowler and McManaman are past and present misses to make an Evertonian weep, but there is little suggestion that the future will be better. Lurking in the ranks of Liverpool's youth and reserve teams is a striker who, if his current scoring rate is anything to go by, is better than Rush, Fowler - or Roger Hunt, for that matter.

Michael Owen, who turned 17 only last month, naturally spotted Everton as a boy because his father, Terry, was on the books at Goodison in the 1960s. Born in Chester and now living in Hawarden, he first came to Liverpool's attention when he broke Rush's record of 72 goals for Deeside Schools. His allegiance may have been directed towards one side of Stanley Park, but the attention came from Anfield and he signed for the club.

His record over the last 12 months is astonishing. Last

spring he scored 11 goals in eight games - including a hat-trick against the holders Manchester United - as Liverpool won the FA Youth Cup for the first time in their history; in July he scored the winner over Belgium to earn England a place in the World Youth Cup finals this year; in October he got all four goals in England Under-18's win over Northern Ireland; in 26 club matches this season he has scored 31 times.

Fowler shaped (5ft 5in) rather than Rush (6ft) he looks like a man among boys when he plays with his peers because of

'His instincts took him where his colleagues could not follow, but he still got a hat-trick'

his ability rather than his physique. Speed is what defenders fear, and Owen has plenty of it. Ally that to clinical finishing and runs off the ball that ought to be devised by an older head, and opponents become bemused.

Watching him against Burnley in the Youth Cup earlier in the season showed his teammates, too, have problems keeping up. His instincts took him where his Liverpool colleagues could not follow, but he still got a hat-trick, scoring with both feet, and he also had a header against the bar.

Liverpool, naturally enough, are wary of exposing Owen to

overblown expectation but the fact that they awarded him a first-team squad number as a Christmas present suggests they are ready to unveil their prodigy to the world. As Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, said this week: "If you're good enough, you're old enough."

"Michael is a gem," Steve Heighway, the club's youth development officer, said. "He's very popular with the other lads and he is very strong mentally as well as being technically gifted. I've no doubts he's ready for the first team but the one thing he needs to do is carry on just as he has been."

Owen has, with the brashness of youth, said he is equipped to "tick the demands of a first-team call that might come as soon as today, against Aston Villa. That would make him Liverpool's youngest-ever debutant, something to turn any young man's head, although, so far, he has remained immune to the distractions that can divert the talents of a gifted youngster.

"I'm not going to get carried away," he told Liverpool's official magazine. "It's nice to be compared to the likes of Robbie Fowler but a lot of hard work lies ahead yet. Of course my dream for the future is to play for England, but I have a lot to learn."

When Rush left Anfield for Leeds last season, he could look over his shoulder and say: "I leave Liverpool in good hands. Robbie will probably eclipse all that I achieved." It is galling to think that Fowler, still only 21 himself, might be able to say the same thing about Owen. Particularly if you are an Everton supporter...



Michael Owen: Given a first-team squad number for Christmas Photograph: Emrys

Quick change for transfers

NICK HARRIS

Uefa, European football's ruling body, said yesterday that it wanted to have a new transfer system in place across the whole of Europe by the start of next season.

As the Independent revealed yesterday, plans to introduce changes in Britain are already well advanced. Under a new system outlined in a Football Association discussion paper, out-of-contract players over the age of 24 will be free to move to new clubs without transfer fees. As a result of the Bosman ruling last year, players out of contract already have the right to move without a fee to a club in another European country.

Although the FA said yesterday that it did not believe a new system would be in place this year, a Uefa spokesman said: "The idea is to have a new system before the new season. Obviously that is because there are a lot of transfers in Europe in the summer."

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, said that the Bosman ruling had made change inevitable. "We simply can't ignore European law," he said. "The feeling is that any challenge to the domestic system would inevitably succeed and it would be naive

to think that the current system can stay in place."

Taylor agreed that smaller clubs would be worried by the proposals, with players approaching the end of their contract reluctant to sign another one if they could see the prospect of negotiating their own moves without transfer fees.

The news was greeted enthusiastically by players' agents. One of them, Eric Hall, said: "I never got much of a Christmas present, but I got it today. This is a monster, monster present."

"It's about time too. When a contract's at an end, it's at an end, in football or showbusiness or whatever, it's up for negotiation. For me, it gives us more deals to do. The wages will go up and the money will go where it should - to the stars, the players."

He added that some people will argue that small clubs will suffer. "Well, I say, it's hard cheese if small clubs go out of business. They should be shrewd in their judgments and manage their affairs better."

However, less affluent clubs, unable to commit themselves to long-term contracts for players, were less enthusiastic. Bill Lodge, the secretary of Port Vale, said: "We've got players we've only just taken on at 23 and if we spend time nurturing them, only for them to leave freely, it's disappointing."

Evans after Dominguez

Liverpool hope to sign the Portuguese winger Jose Dominguez in a £2m deal this weekend.

Roy Evans has been in contact with Dominguez's club, Sporting Lisbon, and is set to beat John Toshack's Deportivo La Coruna to his signature.

Ruud Gulit has failed with a bid to sign the Milan defender Paolo Maldini, but Chelsea have been rewarded with a prestigious friendly against their manager's old club next month. However Chelsea's England under-21 defender Michael Duberry is out for the season after snapping his left Achilles tendon in training.

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SPORTING DIGEST

American football

The San Francisco 49ers have named the University of California coach, Steve Manufo, as their new head coach in succession to George Seifert, who quit on Wednesday.

Baseball

YOKOHAMA OPEN (Tokyo) Selected results: Meiji's doubles, third round: Yum Hock and Chen Sze (Taipei) 3-0; Archer and C Hunt (Eng) 15-15; Mixed doubles, second round: P. Anderson and S. Thompson (Eng) 15-15; 1st round: 15-15.

GENERAL ACADEMY UNDER-21 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP (Luton, England): Denmark 2 (Eng names first: M Edge (Lancs) lost 0-2; 2nd round: 0-2; 3rd round: 0-2; 4th round: 0-2; 5th round: 0-2; 6th round: 0-2; 7th round: 0-2; 8th round: 0-2; 9th round: 0-2; 10th round: 0-2; 11th round: 0-2; 12th round: 0-2; 13th round: 0-2; 14th round: 0-2; 15th round: 0-2; 16th round: 0-2; 17th round: 0-2; 18th round: 0-2; 19th round: 0-2; 20th round: 0-2; 21st round: 0-2; 22nd round: 0-2; 23rd round: 0-2; 24th round: 0-2; 25th round: 0-2; 26th round: 0-2; 27th round: 0-2; 28th round: 0-2; 29th round: 0-2; 30th round: 0-2; 31st round: 0-2; 32nd round: 0-2; 33rd round: 0-2; 34th round: 0-2; 35th round: 0-2; 36th round: 0-2; 37th round: 0-2; 38th round: 0-2; 39th round: 0-2; 40th round: 0-2; 41st round: 0-2; 42nd round: 0-2; 43rd round: 0-2; 44th round: 0-2; 45th round: 0-2; 46th round: 0-2; 47th round: 0-2; 48th round: 0-2; 49th round: 0-2; 50th round: 0-2; 51st round: 0-2; 52nd round: 0-2; 53rd round: 0-2; 54th round: 0-2; 55th round: 0-2; 56th round: 0-2; 57th round: 0-2; 58th round: 0-2; 59th round: 0-2; 60th round: 0-2; 61st round: 0-2; 62nd round: 0-2; 63rd round: 0-2; 64th round: 0-2; 65th round: 0-2; 66th round: 0-2; 67th round: 0-2; 68th round: 0-2; 69th round: 0-2; 70th round: 0-2; 71st round: 0-2; 72nd round: 0-2; 73rd round: 0-2; 74th round: 0-2; 75th round: 0-2; 76th round: 0-2; 77th round: 0-2; 78th round: 0-2; 79th round: 0-2; 80th round: 0-2; 81st round: 0-2; 82nd round: 0-2; 83rd round: 0-2; 84th round: 0-2; 85th round: 0-2; 86th round: 0-2; 87th round: 0-2; 88th round: 0-2; 89th round: 0-2; 90th round: 0-2; 91st round: 0-2; 92nd round: 0-2; 93rd round: 0-2; 94th round: 0-2; 95th round: 0-2; 96th round: 0-2; 97th round: 0-2; 98th round: 0-2; 99th round: 0-2; 100th round: 0-2; 101st round: 0-2; 102nd round: 0-2; 103rd round: 0-2; 104th round: 0-2; 105th round: 0-2; 106th round: 0-2; 107th round: 0-2; 108th round: 0-2; 109th round: 0-2; 110th round: 0-2; 111th round: 0-2; 112th round: 0-2; 113th round: 0-2; 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Murrayfield test
Arwel Thomas must answer the critics against Scotland, page 28

sport

Laid-back Strachan
Coventry City's manager faces familiar foe, page 30



Tim Henman was at full stretch but still lost in straight sets to Michael Chang in the third round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday

Photograph: Rick Rycroft/AP

Chang ends Henman charge

Tennis

DERRICK WHYTE
reports from Melbourne

The scoreline and the statistics told the full, sad story for Tim Henman yesterday as the world No 2, Michael Chang, progressed to the last 16 of the Australian Open here. A 6-1, 7-6, 6-3 victory for the 24-year-old American over Britain's rising star put Henman's superb start to the season in better perspective. He is good, but he is not the finished article yet.

Having added a big serve to his game, experience is now the main thing the 22-year-old Henman needs and the lessons Jim Courier and Chang have taught him in his only two defeats this year should help him to fulfil his enormous potential.

Over the past three weeks, he has won 11 of 13 matches, moved up from 29th to 14th in the world rankings, reached his first ATP Tour final and then took his first title on the circuit.

"I always focus on the positive. I'll forget about this performance and think about the start to the year," he said. "It won't take me long to see I am moving in the right direction."

"I think I can learn from this match and I will get over the dis-

appointment quickly. It was a bad day at the office. I played a poor match. It's as simple as that. "It's always disappointing to lose, but it's more the manner of it. I don't think it's anything to do with nerves. I never really got anything going."

"I didn't serve well and that makes life difficult. And I didn't get any rhythm on the baseline. At times I went for a little bit too much on certain shots and was making errors, yet having said the performance was poor, I could have been a set-all."

After Chang ran away with the last five games of the first set, Henman led 4-1 in the second and then, after losing his serve, broke again for 5-3. The record crowd, including a small, but noisy "Barmy Army", watched him serve for the set but the chance went in a flash. A volley over the baseline and three shots into the net gave Chang the game to love and last year's runner-up won the next four points as well to level.

Henman began the tie-break by double-faulting, one of six he had in the match. Chang won it easily 7-3 and, after seven games went with serve in the third set, double-faulting again to put Chang 5-3 ahead. Minutes later it was over.

He knew he was the underdog against the quickest man in tennis but Henman, a quarter-finalist at Wimbledon last year, knew he could have played much better. He got in only 45 per cent of his first serves, 14 per cent down on his second-round match with Guillaume Raoux. He served only three aces, compared to 11 against Raoux.

Both players had six break

points. Chang took five of his, Henman only two. Chang won 68 per cent of the points on his second serve, Henman a mere 37 per cent of his. The British No 1 made 40 unforced errors compared to 14 of his opponent.

Chang, still to drop a set in the championship, was generous in victory. "There were times when Tim hit some great forehands and he is a very talented player,"

he said after their first meeting. "he's still very young and has a very bright future ahead of him." Henman added: "That I didn't take my chances adds to the frustration. The Barmy Army are always a great help and I'm disappointed I didn't give them more to cheer. But it (their presence) shows that I am beginning to make an impact."

"It's been a busy time for me, but it's proving that all the work I'm doing off the court is paying dividends. I still feel fresh. He will nevertheless enjoy the short rest he is now taking. His next appearance is in Dubai next month."

For the second round running Steffi Graf climbed out of a hole to stay on course for a fifth Australian Open title. The world No 1 and top seed was 5-2 down to world No 98 Ines Gorochategui but won the next five games and took the second set 6-3.

On Wednesday Graf, now on a run of 45 successive victories at the four major championships, lost the first four games to Larisa Neiland and had to save a set point before coming through 7-5, 6-2.

"I'm not happy with the way I am starting, but when it gets down to the important points I am focusing more," Graf said. "I just need to do it earlier." She next plays 12th seed Amanda

Coetzer, the South African who ended Graf's 32-match unbeaten tournament run in 1995.

The fifth and seventh seeds, Andre Agassi and Lindsay Davenport respectively, had much easier days. Agassi, her mother now out of hospital after collapsing at the tennis on Wednesday, beat Natasha Zvereva 7-5, 6-0 and Olympic champion Davenport overcame Thailand's Tamarine Tanasugarn 6-1, 6-0.

The Wimbledon runner-up, Mal Washington, and ninth seed Marcelo Rios, of Chile, came back from a set down to advance to the last 16 of the men's singles. Washington beat Australian Todd Woodbridge 4-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-1 and Rios Austria's Gilbert Schaller 4-6, 7-6, 6-1, 6-1.

Unseeded Spaniard Carlos Moya, the man who knocked out the defending champion Boris Becker on Monday and who Britain's Tim Henman beat in the final in Sydney last Saturday, thrashed German Bernd Karbacher in straight sets, dropping just two games in each.

Britain's Neil Broad, with whom Henman won Olympic silver in Atlanta, reached the last 16 of the men's doubles with South African Piet Norval. The 16th seeds beat Pat Cash and Czech Petr Korda 6-7, 7-6, 6-3. Mary Pierce photograph, page 29



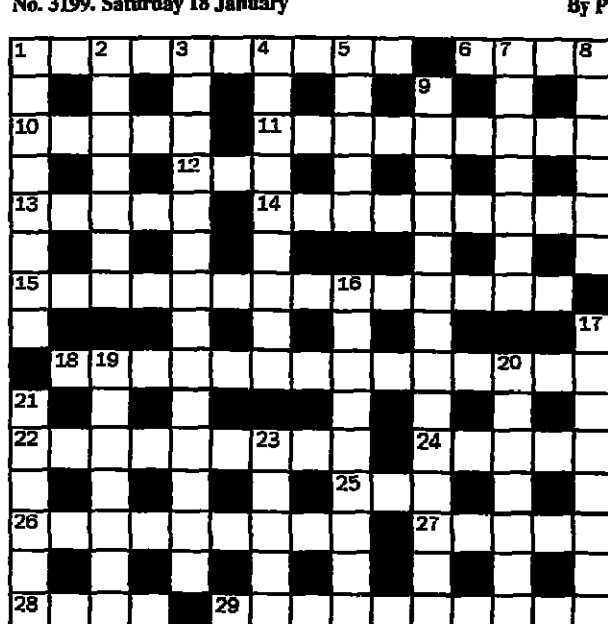
Henman greets his conqueror Chang

Photograph: Allsport

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3199, Saturday 18 January

By Phil



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

ACROSS
1 Mistakenly look stern about very good indication of affection (6, 4)
6 Odds on mother keeping back meat (4)
10 A little decency nicely - dismissed by me? (5)
11 Composer coming from marsh with another composer (9)
12 The sound of people waiting to visit gardens (3)
13 Annoyed old king, trapped in a US city (5)
14 Russian author depicting group of soldiers in love, not battling (9)
15 Less stuffy song prepared? (3-11)
18 Early German resident deducible from a handle remnant, possibly (11,3)
22 Put down "500" is a standard number of years in history" (9)
24 Country estate feeling very damp and unpleasant, ultimately (5)
25 Joke that's not entirely weak (3)
26 One play is restaged in Pacific islands (9)
27 Take in extremely new golf-course... (5)
28 ... being unhappy about new hazard there! (4)
29 Rating fools "blokes in the way" (10)

DOWN
1 Appear short of time, alas! (-1-3)
2 Condonment - very in vogue, on the up-turn (7)
3 But they're not actually on the San Andreas fault! (5, 9)
4 News showing King currently left on border (9)
5 Name a price for lidless box (5)
7 Talk from conductor under piano (7)
8 Desert area doctor wants to own (6)
9 Initially pseudo relation (if son may be this?) (2, 4, 8)
16 Prominent feature of book is honour given to court attendant (5, 4)
17 Diana's abandoning vague intuition (8)
19 Letter causing English no speech problem, on reflection (7)
20 Might used to suppress Slav's springtime symbol (7)
21 A department's skilled workforce? (6)
22 Does wrong taking top off parts of church (5)

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Time for Bowling to deliver results

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWITT

Kevin Bowling has yet to receive a vote of no confidence from his employers at Cardiff Arms Park, so the Welsh coach's job looks more secure than most at the moment.

That cosy situation is likely to change if Wales come unstuck in Edinburgh today: a sixth successive defeat in Scotland will intensify the clamour for another cull of the Red Dragons' top brass. Bowling yesterday was quick to dispel any notion that he might be under more pressure than usual. "I've signed a four-year contract that takes me through to 1999."

There is a growing feeling in Welsh circles that he needs a minimum 50 per cent return from this season's Five Nations if he is to survive. The opener at Murrayfield represents a golden opportunity for the Welsh to bring to an end a barren run away from home. They have won twice in Dublin

in the 1990s, but have not won at Twickenham since 1988, at Murrayfield since 1985 or in Paris since 1975. The rank and file supporters are unusually optimistic this season, thanks to the return of Scott Gibbs, Allan Bateman, David Young, Scott Quinnell and Jonathan Davies from rugby league.

Bowling knows he has to deliver quickly. "We have made steady progress over the last year or so by playing the top sides in the world and learning something from each defeat. But that is no longer enough: it is now vital that we produce results."

Bowling has found success as an elusive commodity since taking over as coach 14 months ago: a record of five wins in 13 Tests - two of them against Italy, one over the United States and another against an under-strength Barbarians mish-mash - leaves him badly exposed. If the book-makers have it right - Ladbrokes were quoting Wales as 11-8 outsiders yesterday with the Scots at 4-7 - that vote of confidence may not be long in coming.

In Monday's 28-page sports section



Eight-page Super Bowl supplement

Comprehensive guide to next Sunday's Super Bowl XXXI, including a detailed preview, analysis of where the game will be won and lost, and quarterback profiles

Robson on mission improbable

Football
GUY HODGSON

Managers struggling to find the right words to put to their charges before today's matches have one consolation: things could be a lot worse, they could be Bryan Robson.

What does the Middlesex-born player-manager say to encourage hope where there appears to be none? Bottom of the table, seven points adrift of a position of safety and with just one win in their last 16 Premiership matches, Boro are lurching from problem to problem like a tipsy agony aunt.

The mood among the players, if only a fraction of what you read in the papers is correct, is less than wholesome while rumours about Robson's position circulate round Teesside with a vengeance. Last week the club had to deny he was resigning, yesterday there was talk that Bruce Rioch was joining the backroom staff.

Meanwhile Fabrizio Ravanelli, whose nickname has changed locally from the white feather to the white flag, was quoted in Italian newspapers saying he wanted to return to Juventus. "I'm not escaping," he told *La Repubblica*. "I'm not a traitor. I want to leave my club in the Premier League where I found it. In June, well, it will be different. Fabrizio Ravanelli has stayed a Juventus and will always be."

All of which has come on top of the Premier League docking Boro three points for failing to fulfil their fixture at Blackburn, so you could say spirits have been better as they prepare to meet Sheffield Wednesday, who are 13 games into an unbeaten run.

"It's been a disappointing week for everyone," Robson said, "but there's no point in moping, we have to get on with the job. If we lie down there's going to be only one outcome and that's defeat."

"Wednesday are a good passing team. David Pleat has got them well organised and at the moment they're on a good run. We're difficult opponents but we've had three points taken off us and the sooner we get them back the better."

Robson has the consolation of being able to field his new £2.7m Italian defender, Gianluca Festa, but such is the way things are going at the moment, his arrival will be more than matched by suspensions to Neil Cox and Craig Hignett. Wednesday must decide whether to include David Hirst and Jon Newsome from the start.

Luxury of choice is beyond

Liverpool and Aston Villa as they prepare to meet at Anfield. The home team will be without John Barnes and Neil Ruddock because of injury and Michael Thomas and Phil Babb through suspension, while Villa are so short of midfield players that even Sasa Curcic - persona non grata since his moving from Bolton was the biggest mistake of my life - comment - may play.

Liverpool have taken just 10 points from their last seven home games and will lose their hold on the top of the Premiership if they draw today and Manchester United win at Coventry. Nevertheless, Brian Little is more concerned by that run rather than uplifted by it.

"Liverpool are in a bad spell," the Villa manager said, "and I'm always wary of teams in bad spells. That's when they are at their most dangerous. The game is absolutely massive for us. We could go 10 points behind which would be a lot to make up on a team like Liverpool. On the other hand if we win we'll be in a useful position."

As for £4m signing Curcic, Little added: "I had a good talk with his people and now I'm trying to get to the root of the problem. Something has clearly upset him, and I've got a rough idea what it is."

Kenny Dalglish should also have a better idea about Newcastle United's problems after today's match at Southampton, his first Premiership game since taking over from Kevin Keegan.

Dalglish has a reputation for being more roundhead than his cavalier predecessor but his message yesterday was: meet the new boss, same as the old boss. "You can only ask the players to play in a way that suits them," he said. "There won't be anything ripped up and thrown away on the scrapheap."

Coventry have had problems breaching that gap, no matter how narrow, and they will be without Dion Dublin for today's visit of Manchester United, and the foreseeable future. He misses seven matches after being sent off twice in two weeks, while the visitors will be without David May who has a hernia operation today. Dennis Irwin returns for the champions.

Leicester's Matt Elliott, a club record £1.6m signing, will make his debut against Wimbledon while Chelsea, who meet Derby, learned yesterday that their England Under-21 defender Michael Duberry will be missing for the rest of the season with an Achilles injury.

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